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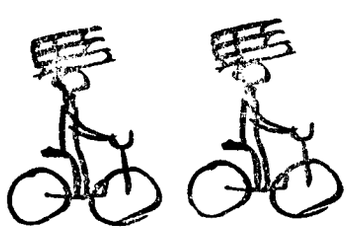

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THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

THE BISHOPS' STATEMENT

THE STATEMENT which the Catholic Bishops of the United States issued at the end of their annual meeting, addressed as it is to the issues of freedom and peace, has an immediate relevance to our present political position. There are today, as the Bishops' statement pointed out, many grave obstacles to the attainment of peace and freedom. Excessive nationalism abroad; excessive attention to material possessions at home; grinding poverty and its inevitable consequences in vast areas around the world; the unresolved problems and tensions bequeathed to us by recent wars—all these stand between the world and peace. We should not be deflected from solving these problems, the Bishops stated, even by the far greater threat of Communism.

The quest for peace must take us along tortuous, winding paths where the terrain is uncharted and uncertain. Nevertheless, while statesmen must work unceasingly for those conditions under which peace and freedom can come into being and flourish, they must "be firm in upholding principle and justice, knowing that appeasement in such matters leads only to the peace of the conquered. It is a delusion to place hope in seeking real understanding when the true problem is a conflict of essential principles, not lack of understanding." These are familiar cautions which Catholics and non-Catholics have heard and expressed frequently in the past. Why do they seem particularly relevant at this point? Why does such a familiar note no longer have the same ring?

To answer such questions one must only consider the events of the last several months. Mr. Nikita Khrushchev has visited or made plans to visit many of the world's leaders. And the idea that a visit by Khrushchev confers some "status" is so accepted that it has become material for cartoonists around the world. He can no longer appear, as he once did to many people, to be only the humorless, brutal suppressor of Hungary. The change is symbolized by his meeting with President Eisenhower at Camp David, which inspired the phrase "the spirit of Camp David." While the phrase has less currency in the United States than it does in Russia, where the "spirit" is referred to as the solvent of grave problems, there are many Americans who are attracted to the large hopes which it holds out.

PREMIER Khrushchev's visits are, probably, the most dramatic of the events which have marked changes in the relationship between the Western allies and Russia. But there are, of course, others: Mr. Nixon's open debating with Mr. Khrushchev in Russia; the agreement to extend cultural exchanges between Russia and the United States; the dissemination in Russia of criticisms made by Secretary of State Christian Herter and by Dean Acheson; and the criticism of irresponsible Russian scientific claims by Russian scientists. This varied catalogue of changes in Russia's response to the outside world could readily be extended. But in the total picture of international relations they are, admittedly, very slight. However optimistic a view one might adopt toward the new agreement on cultural exchanges, for instance, it must be acknowledged that the exchanges are miniscule compared to what might be. And the same judgment can be made about other welcome but slight improvements in the international political atmosphere.

The danger implicit in the naívete with which, on such a frail basis, commentators and political leaders have welcomed these changes is that they will burden the future with an undue optimism,

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that they will lead others to expect of the impending summit meeting more than it can realistically produce. The danger, in other terms, is that America will pass from an irrational, and at times hysterical, position derived from fear to an equally irrational position which follows from excessive hope.

In this political context the Bishops' statement, familiar as it may sound to many ears, takes on renewed meaning. "While negotiating unceasingly for better relations with the Communist regimes," the Bishops state, "we must never forget that their system and ours are as basically different as slavery and freedom. To palliate the difference is to subvert the cause of freedom and peace."

This is the basis on which the Western powers must develop their policy. It avoids the path of "angelism," the path suggested by those who say that we must not negotiate with Communist countries, must not speak with Communist leaders, must not recognize Communist regimes. It avoids equally the path of those who would once again be deluded by Communist promises, by Communist invitations. It points the way to the hard, realistic and necessary negotiations which will, if we are fortunate, be our lot for years ahead.

INCREASING OUTPUT

HOW VITAL is the present need for accelerating our national production to keep pace with the industrial progress of the U.S.R.R. and other countries? Immediately, American prestige is involved, especially in the underdeveloped lands; ultimately, and perhaps within a decade, there is a possibility of Russia's catching up. This does serve as an argument favoring the efficacy of Communist forced production over our system of free enterprise, even though our output is still far ahead. The growing momentum of the postwar recovery we furthered in Western Europe also tends to make the American economy look as if it were standing still. But how meaningful are the over-all figures for annual increases in each case? And how much more startling would be the effect if they were broken down into capital goods (which comprise the base for further production) and consumers goods (which account for so large a proportion of our own national output)?

It is conceivable that America's Gross National Product could be markedly increased by means of a concerted advertising campaign creating new "needs" that would raise our material living standards still higher. Even a big jump in the number

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of two-car or two-T.V.-set families could do that. What would that really indicate, however, about the comparative superiority of the American way if other essential goods and services continued to be neglected?

It is not the comparative over-all rates that are disquieting, but rather that a nation with our productive capacities appears content to allow its residential districts to deteriorate, its schools to become badly overcrowded, outmoded and unsafe, its citizens, in large numbers, to remain deprived of the expanded medical facilities they need. And it might be added that we also fail to gear our production to the increases that would be required to meet some of the outside world's most urgent needs. These are the disturbing considerations.

Finally, there is a new tendency to ascribe the productive stagnation of which America is guilty to our preference for greater leisure over greater production and higher income. Doubtless we Americans enjoy our time off as much as other peoples, and our shorter work week has much to do with our capacity for consumption, but there are other factors. As mechanization increases and veers toward automation, the shorter work week serves primarily as a device for spreading the work and preserving jobs. It is not that we like hard work any less but that we fear deprivation of gainful employment more.

TICKET MAKING

IF THE PROFESSIONAL politicians had their way, David Lawrence said some time ago, we'd have two "ideal" tickets in next fall's election: for the Democrats, Stevenson and Kennedy; for the Republicans, Nixon and Rockefeller—in that order, of course, in both cases. But it does not look as if the politicians' dreams will come true.

Senator Kennedy must be getting sick of hearing that he and Adlai would make a good team. Few things, we imagine, dishearten a candidate for the No. 1 spot quite as much as "friendly" booms for the Vice Presidency. Anyway, Senator Kennedy's friends recently "leaked" two items to the press: 1) Senator Kennedy will not accept a Vice Presidential nomination; 2) the Senator thinks Adlai Stevenson would make a great Secretary of State. Politics is a strange business, but that latter point, we should think, must put an end to speculations about a Stevenson-Kennedy ticket, at least for now. If Presidential candidates do not like to be praised as great Vice Presidential material, they like even less to be touted for Cabinet jobs, and Adlai Stevenson is not apt to appreciate the Kennedy "tribute."

For his part, Governor Rockefeller of New York has not suggested that "Dick," as he calls him occasionally, would make a good Postmaster-General —or not yet, anyway. But he is running as hard as he can, given the circumstances in which he finds himself, and we are not yet nearly as inclined as some commentators to write his candidacy off.

Governor Rockefeller has made it quite clear from the beginning that he would not accept the Vice Presidential nomination; there will be no sure-fire Nixon-Rockefeller ticket to please the hearts of professional politicians. The obvious fact that Mr. Nixon is way ahead among G.O.P. party workers does not mean too much; so was Senator Taft, and he went down before the "Bob can't win" campaign of Eisenhower supporters. Mr. Nixon is obviously vulnerable to the same charge, even though Governor Rockefeller has so far approached this subject very delicately.

In the beginning Mr. Rockefeller took the tack that any Republican who waged an aggressive campaign could win in 1960. Later, perhaps after it was pointed out that no one ever accused Mr. Nixon of lack of aggressiveness, the Governor begged off, saying no one could sensibly predict a victory in 1960. Later still, Governor Rockefeller said he thought Mr. Nixon "probably" could win an election today, but that he was not sure about next year. However, he also firmly denied any intention of campaigning for the nomination on a "Nixon can't win" platform.

We don't doubt the Governor's intentions, but whether he campaigns by saying that Nixon can't win or by denying that he believes this point, the effect is much the same: the seed of doubt has been sown. And reflection on the poor G.O.P. showings in the last two elections where Mr. Nixon was the major Republican campaigner could help that seed to grow. Politicians have sentiments, as everyone does, and Mr. Nixon is one of their own. But sentiment couldn't nominate Bob Taft, and we don't think it will save Richard Nixon if he looks like a loser.

Everything depends, then, on New Hampshire, where the primary takes place on March 8. The state is relatively small, and it offers a good chance for the Rockefeller campaigning tactic to reach most voters. If Governor Rockefeller swamps Mr. Nixon in New Hampshire, as the Eisenhower forces did those of Senator Taft, the Republicans may be

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able to run Rockefeller and Nixon in 1960, after all—in that order, of course.

SHOWDOWN ON ALGERIA

GENERAL CHARLES de Gaulle has intensified his efforts for a solution to the Algerian question by carrying the battle anew to his two principal adversaries. His warning to the Algerian nationalists to decide definitely for secession, association with France or integration comes after they have had 68,000 killed in a single year. He pleaded with them to spare other young men who could devote themselves to the building of the new Algeria. General de Gaulle also has to contend with the extremists in his own party (supporters of the French *colons* in North Africa). He insists that nothing be done to influence the Algerians in making their free choice, whereas many army officers on the scene and Gaullist party leaders find only integration into France acceptable.

For the Algerians, if they consent to negotiate on the basis of de Gaulle's promises, there are but two choices. The economic, cultural and other benefits that would accrue from association with France are a consideration—but against them would be weighed the cruelties of a long war and a desire for full-fledged independence.

Moreover, de Gaulle still has to contend with the key obstacle to reaching an agreement. The F.L.N. nationalists insist on a political settlement prior to a cease-fire, while the army demands an armistice first. Back of this is the army's conception of itself as the firm and friendly hand that will help set up a new French-Moslem Algeria in which both elements willingly cooperate—although the nationalists hold out for a referendum in which the army would not have the slightest supervisory role. If, after five years of battle, any sizable withdrawal of forces would threaten the morale of the French army, de Gaulle may in the end have to utilize all his personal prestige to achieve the concessions to the nationalists required to unblock the road toward peace.

FOR SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS

A LITERARY-intellectual-religious event which has not been much remarked is the recent Lecomte du Nouy 1959 Award to the eminent scientific thinker Michael Polanyi. The award honors the memory of Pierre Lecomte du Nouy, the French scientist-philosopher, "father of bio-physics" and author of *Human Destiny*. Award winners are selected alternately in France and the U.S. for "significant contributions to the spiritual thought of our epoch," particularly the relation between science and religion.

Dr. Polanyi was honored for his books *Personal Knowledge* and *The Study of Man,* works which embody the reasoning which led him to affirm the inseparability of "fact" and "value." The scientist's "personal knowledge," he declares, is an attribute and responsibility of which he cannot divest himself.

The Lecomte du Nouy Awards are distinguished for their high standards: no award was made in 1958 because the judges decided there had been no suitable work published that year; in 1957 the recipient was William Ernest Hocking of Harvard, for his book *The Coming World Civilization*. These standards, plus the practical value of the Award—a cash grant and public honor for the author and distribution of his books to libraries all over the world—make the annual Awards an unusual, quietly effective support to the thinking and writing our times so sorely need.

HUR, US AND THEM

IF WE had a man Stanley, we'd send him right over to New York's *new* Loew's State theater. This is the theater showing the super-super-colossal remake of the religious spectacle "Ben-Hur," but it isn't the fifteen-million-dollar extravaganza itself that intrigues us. We're impressed by an architectural adjustment made in the theater lobby for the special convenience of those who go to see this movie.

Since "Ben-Hur" has a running time of three hours and thirty-three minutes, it is shown, mercifully, with intermissions. And rather than let their patrons mill around uselessly in the lobby, the managers of the theater have gotten together with the proprietors of a bar immediately adjoining and knocked a hole in the lobby wall which hitherto kept their customers apart.

We decided that this was the sort of entrepreneur spirit that made America great, and we broached the idea to our neighbors in the building. None of them showed any interest, however. The bank downstairs, a neighbor we'd had particular hopes for, turned out to be unbelievably stuffy and suspicious. But never say die, as Ben-Hur might say.

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Infernal Theater

Although Michel de Ghelderode has been a force in Belgian letters for thirty years, he is almost unknown here

by SAMUEL DRAPER

WHEN A LOCAL television interviewer recently asked a professor of literature whom he considered to be Belgium's greatest living man of letters, without hesitation the teacher answered, "Maurice Maeterlinck." He then went on to speak of Maeterlinck, who died in 1949, as a playwright still alive, overstating his theatrical influence (which had in fact declined early in the century) and never mentioning Maeterlinck's contributions to poetry, philosophy, and science.

The professor flunked the examination put to him by the interviewer, and thousands of onlookers were left with a bumper of half-truths. Mired in error, the professor missed an occasion to tell the world of several living Belgian writers unknown in our country but deserving recognition: Henry Michaux, Marcel Thiry, Suzanne Lilar, or Fernand Crommelynck, and most notable of all, the playwright Michel de Ghelderode.

Although the Flemish author has been a force in Belgian letters for thirty years and has written more than fifty plays published in French, he is almost unknown in the United States. But a number of reliable critics believe that Ghelderode will achieve at least Maeterlinck's fame. In fact, within a few years, they judge, our more thoughtful audiences will have experienced several Ghelderode plays and will have acclaimed the author as they have Lorca, Brecht, Pirandello, O'Casey, Beckett, and Ionesco.

What is it about Ghelderode that prompts this prediction? Why are the man, his legend, and his work so absorbing to serious literary people who believe the theater can stimulate emotion, thought, and action—in short that drama can and should be a home for ideas and eminent language? What is it in his creation that moves, grips, and at times overpowers his audiences?

Since Ghelderode answers few letters, does not supply photographs of himself or respond to questionnaires, appear on television, receive guests or give autographs, he has become somewhat legendary in the theatrical world. Although few people have even seen him, we are assured of his existence by the *Dictionnaire des Sciences, des Lettres et des Arts en Belgique,* which says:

"Ghelderode, Michel de, dramatist. Born April 2, 1898 in Ixelles (Brabant), Belgium. Wrote his first short stories and one-act plays in 1918, the best of which is *L'Histoire Comique de Keizer Karel.* In 1928 became co-editor of *La Flandre Littéraire.* Wrote *La Mort du Docteur Faust* in 1924-25 which was first performed in Paris in 1928. *Les Images de la Vie de Saint François d'Assise* was written and performed in Belgium in 1927. *Barabbas, Fastes d'Enfer,* and *Pantagleize* performed in Belgium in 1929. Wrote a dozen plays between 1930 and 1942 among which was *Escurial.* In 1947 *Hop Signor!* was first given in Paris, and since then many of his plays have been seen in the French capital. Gallimard of Paris has published five volumes of Ghelderode *Théâtre,* some of which is being translated into English, German, and Spanish. Ghelderode is the recipient of the Prix de l'Academie Picard and of the Prix de la Fondation Rubens, the former awarded in 1928 and the latter in 1929. Lives today in Brussels."

THESE ARE the facts, but what they suggest is more important—Ghelderode's light shines continuously in Belgium, ascends rapidly in Paris, and is even beginning to appear in our country. As for the legend, people have said that he is a dead man still alive, a lone wolf, a defrocked monk, that he is young, old, and has lived in Calderón's or Shakespeare's time. Ghelderode himself says that he has not contradicted any of the strange stories people tell about him because what people think of him is not important. "Besides," he has said, "the world needs fables!"

The legend has been allowed to grow because

Mr. Draper is currently in Belgium where he is engaged in translating Ghelderode's plays into English.

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Ghelderode, after literally sailing the seven seas, withdrew himself for long periods to the quiet of small, ancient towns away from people. Now he lives in a house in Brussels with all the shutters closed, in total solitude and indifference to his fame and success. About his solitude, he writes in his autobiography *Les Entretiens d'Ostende* (The Ostend Interviews):

"I was born in solitude, and I have grown up in a crystal sphere of solitude like a Bosch figure encased in a glass bubble. I had two brothers, one sister: but solitude has been my real company, my real sister. In spite of the presence of my parents and a wholesome and united family, I always seemed to be alone, even when I was with my loved ones. I love solitude for her own sake. She is a pure love. I need her. She is my partner. Without her I can do nothing, and she is purifying, a balm for my soul. Nothing on earth could make me abandon my solitude, which I jealously defend. I say it once again: my fate is to be alone."

LEAVING his cloistered home is painful, and he has not attended any of the premieres of his plays in Paris. *Hop Signor!,* presented in Paris in 1947, was the first Ghelderode play to be seen in France. Two years later three Ghelderode plays were given in Paris: *Mademoiselle Jaïre, Fastes d'Enfer* (Rites of Hell) and, again, *Hop Signor!* Paris has seen *Ecole des Bouffons* (School of Clowns) and *Magie Rouge* (Red Magic) in the last two years. All these performances received praise from the reviewers, one critic writing: "It is obvious that Ghelderode possesses a dramatic temperament of rare vigor. Everything he sees, thinks, writes is theatrical. His style is *un style de théâtre* comparable to that of some of our greatest dramatists. I can remember no more surging, rhythmical language, nor more sumptuous imagery."

In addition to Ghelderode's ability to create genuinely rich language, he has, to say the least, a talent for creating provocative situations and exceptional characters. He describes the characters in *Escurial* (the first Ghelderode play to be published in English) thus:

"*The King* is sick and wan; he wears his crown awry; his robes are fouled. Around his neck, along his fingers are imitation stones. He is a feverish king, with rotting teeth, in love with black magic and liturgy. El Greco, that awkward artist, has painted his portrait.

"*Folial,* the buffoon, is an athlete with twisted legs, a spidery clown in his livery of showy colors. He comes from Flanders. His head—a big expressive ball—is lit by wolf-like eyes.

"*The Monk* is dark and tubercular, and the *Man in Scarlet* has huge hairy fingers."

Ghelderode has said that most of his characters were created in Bruges, his favorite city. In this "dramaturgical spot" were born his amazing throng of buffoons, torturers, degenerate kings, monks of blasphemous character, women in full bloom on the arms of lecherous old men, sorcerers, possessed, ecstatic, delirious people. "This infernal theater," writes Suzanne Lilar, one of Ghelderode's colleagues, "is akin, through its poetry, its audacity and its violence, to that of Marlowe, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Ford. Like their work, Ghelderode's plays are given a baroque flavor by their excesses, paroxysms, love of the weird and atrocious, and their many-sided passion for movement and life."

In addition to the authors mentioned by Miss Lilar, one recognizes Ghelderode's spiritual kinship with Ann Radcliffe, Monk Lewis, Baudelaire, and Oscar Wilde, writers who gathered inspiration from spiritual depths and heights. Ghelderode is kin to all artists who believe the visible universe is only a narrow part of reality and that the supernatural surrounds us. In his autobiography Ghelderode writes: "I will tell you that it is quite natural for someone who has poetic sense to be aware of the supernatural. We find the supernatural all around us; it is part of us. Have you ever come across your face reflected in an old mirror? . . . If some people never perceive the supernatural around them, this proves nothing. Let us just say such people are impervious to everything: to music, poetry, light, love, and sounds of the world, the chant of the dead, the glimmering and joy of living. Even in the lowest things, in the most everyday happenings, one can perceive the supernatural and intercept its messages. An angel sits on my shoulder, a devil wiggles in my pocket . . . The supernatural is everywhere. Could you, without great loss, sever it from art?" The world of the supernatural attracts Ghelderode as much as it did Shakespeare.

THE SPIRITUAL and mysterious have had little credit with American dramatists, who write in the naturalistic tradition bequeathed by Balzac and Zola. Defined by the latter in 1881, the naturalistic doctrine acted then as an antidote to the contrived formulas of the "well-made" play and the grand sentiments of the romantic age. Today, however, Zola's ideas have been overworked and exhausted, and we have seen on the boards too many men drawn exactly from "reality" and "scientifically" analyzed. Too much external detail and precise recording of nature have paralyzed our drama. Most of its characters do not dream *or* think—neither do they know beauty, worship, or noble ideas although the world of the unexpected, uncertain, invisible, and superhuman has figured in the creation of the greatest playwrights from Sophocles to T. S. Eliot. Still, Ghelderode's visionary characters and their descriptions of the splendid beauties and wonders of both the real and spiritual worlds would not be acceptable to us if they were not sustained by the power of poetic language.

Ghelderode's *Barabbas* is a version *sui generis* of the

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Passion of Christ as the author sees it "through the people" or "from beneath," from the angle of Brueghel, the medieval puppet plays, or Molière. Although Ghelderode centers the tragedy on Barabbas, the assassin and villain, he makes us the spectators of Jesus' sufferings. While the apostles, stricken with fright, try to hide among the scum of the populace, while strolling players prepare their carnival for the crowd on Mount Golgotha that will seek entertainment after Christ's death, we see the drama that unfolds on the Holy Mount: the noisy rabble, the darkness broken by lightning, the death agony of Christ, and finally the flaming Golgotha. To translate this scene into wholly visual terms would require, perhaps, three painters like Bosch, Brueghel, and El Greco. Ghelderode has language as well.

Although the joy and sorrow of Ghelderode are not precisely those of Garcia Lorca, the Flemish and Spanish writer share a poetic vision. The mysticism of the Flemish, that provocative mixture of the carnal, the supernatural, and the grotesque, is not unlike the sensual metaphor and idiom of the Andalusian peasantry. Ghelderode's and Lorca's common vision comes from the Middle Ages. To both, death is omnipresent. In a letter written to a fellow-poet, Lorca declares: "I am now writing a kind of *opening-the-veins* poetry, a poetry altogether averted from reality, with a feeling which reflects all my *love* for things and all my *mocking* of things. My love of death and poking fun at her." Ghelderode in his autobiography admits: "I laugh at death . . . and make fun of her, but she will return, be certain of that. Although you do not love her, she remains with you, and she is the only person of whose fidelity you can be certain. Crown her with roses!"

In his plays Ghelderode attempts to define the odor of the characters just as he trys to describe their bulk, gait, voice quality, and other mannerisms. These odors and extra-human odors are mentioned in *Escurial,* where the decaying palace smells of mushrooms and musty cellars, in *Mademoiselle Jaïre* where the characters speak of inhaling the subtle incense of nihilism, and in *Les Femmes au Tombeau* where Judas' house is filled with the odor of his betrayal and is talked about by the women as an evil scent. Ghelderode has written, "Why has odor been discredited to the gain of other senses deemed more important? Smell is a minor sense? Come now! Tell that to the Oriental poets and to Marguerite Gautier and Mme. de Pompadour, braced with perfumes!" Ghelderode has inhaled the fragrance of saintliness and sniffed at the odor of death. "One only has to read," he says, "—by the nose if I dare say it!"

ALTHOUGH the five volumes of Ghelderode's *Théâtre* have not yet been published in English, Hill and Wang, Inc. hope to bring out the initial volume within a year. Loyola University in Chicago recently presented *Barabbas,* the first Ghelderode play to be given in America. Several little theater and college groups have produced *Escurial* and future performances of several other plays are presently being considered.

This spring *The Women at the Tomb* was performed off-Broadway, the first professional showing of a Ghelderode play in New York. A short work, *The Women at the Tomb* belongs to Ghelderode's religious drama, which makes up one-third of his dramatic *oeuvre.* About these plays, Eric Bentley has written: "It may well be that the finest religious plays of the past fifty years are by Paul Claudel and Michel de Ghelderode. The former is just barely a name to our theater public, the latter, not even that. Nor, perhaps, does Ghelderode conform to the received idea of a religious dramatist. His plays are not sermons. Some of them, indeed, have been considered blasphemous. But a spirit breathes through them that might be called religious: and some of them—such as *The Women at the Tomb*—have religious subjects. It is the special achievement of a writer like Ghelderode that he enables us to see Biblical characters with the same eyes through which we see our friends—and enemies. He holds that a certain kind of reverence only impedes the imagination. He can visualize a Christ Who could dance."

The women of the play share their thoughts about Christ when they are brought together by chance in a small room after Christ's death. Pure and impure, they consider themselves Christians, and Ghelderode presents them sympathetically as they express a number of mankind's foibles. Martha says at the end, "Women, worthy and unworthy, let's go to the tomb, all of us with our different feelings." Finally alone, Christ's mother, who has not permitted herself to cry before the others, weeps for her dead son. "I am no longer the Mother of God whom they crucified, I am the mother of him they condemned to death . . ."

WHEN A discerning critic calls a playwright and his work "popular" in the United States, he usually means among other things, that the plays have little literary merit. Since "popular" has been applied often to playwrights whose works are melodramas—conflicts between the all-bad and the all-good—or to dramatists who are synthetic folklorists, amateur sociologists, or psychoanalysts, the adjective has a pejorative nuance with intellectuals. "Popular is used to classify plays which are not art but entertainment, which titillate the senses, evoke crude responses, and never stir the mind. By these definitions, then, Ghelderode has not created "popular" theater. He says that he guards himself against the ideas of the economist, so-

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ciologist, and philosopher, for his theater is the art of instinct and intelligence, not of psychoanalysis or any analysis that is harmful to vision and divination. He also knows that topical ideas or fads are slavery.

Ghelderode is not a playwright likely to be called popular in America, but he is a *popular* playwright in that special sense that his plays are loved by the Belgians, by the peasant and educated man alike. Because Ghelderode is Flemish to the marrow, his audiences identify themselves with his characters and their folklore tradition. And Ghelderode is a *complex* poet because he is able to interpret his understanding of the folk world of his ancient culture to a modern, mechanized world. In doing so, he draws upon sources as old as the Chinese poets and as modern as Ensor and Rilke.

Ghelderode has not written for the box office but for his own audience on a higher level. He hoped his creations would bring joy, but he never sought to write hits. He never permitted his audience to lead him down that blind alley of easy succes. He says his plays engender as much grief as they do happiness and comfort. If dramatic art is bad, he thinks, it will give only superficial pleasure, but if it is good, it will give everlasting joy. Low theater corrupts and high theater elevates mankind. He knows that men are not perfect, not often very pretty, but they might be more loathsome and evil than they are. He shows us both sides of man's human nature, and says that he believes in *man,* does not despair of him, finds him fascinating, capable of everything bad—and everything good.

Ghelderode's drama is difficult to classify: it is not symbolistic or poetic drama; neither is it romantic, fantastic, naturalistic or epic theatre. He echoes ideas, perhaps, from all these so-called movements, yet his "school" is just that—his own. His characters and their dialogue glow with invention and by making them not only startlingly alive but also articulate, Ghelderode fulfills one of the foremost requirements of theatre art. He provides us with a lucid statement about reality, created from a race and tradition different from our own. This accomplishment, above all, makes his plays works of art. They speak to the spirit of man, delight and satisfy his intellect, appeal to his senses, and stir his emotions. Ghelderode may well be a source of inspiration and salvation for our stuttering, debased, and ineffectual theater, "a theater," said Stark Young, "not even good enough to be bad."

JOHN BETJEMAN

Poet of Anglicanism

by ALAN NEAME

JOHN BETJEMAN, whose *Collected Poems* became a best-seller in England almost immediately upon their appearance, is a peculiarly Anglican poet. Yet his relationship to the Anglican tradition is hard to explain to the non-Anglican reader: first, because the Anglican tradition itself is dense with unresolved contradictions; second, because Anglicanism has never before had a poet to celebrate it for itself, with all its unresolved contradictions loved; third, because Mr. Betjeman is a lyric poet, instinctual, sentimental and satirical, whose attitudes are often masked. For instance, he sometimes pretends to be a Calvinist.

The essence of Anglicanism as defined by its partisans is diversity in unity, by its opponents as organized chaos. Both appreciations hold good for an institution where the Apostolic Succession is valued yet the authority of the bishops frequently ignored; where the Primate condemns divorce yet the Primate is appointed on the recommendation of a perhaps divorced or even non-Anglican Prime Minister; where half the faithful accept the Catholic doctrine of the Sacrifice of the Mass and pray surreptitiously for the Pope, yet the other half believe the Lord's Supper to be a Memorial and no more, and pray the versicle, now removed from the Litany: *From the Bishop of Rome and all his detestable enormities, Good Lord deliver us!*

In a year of Ecumenical hopes, there is no point in dragging all that out again. Anyone familiar with the Episcopalian position can infer the Anglican, except for one important respect: that the Episcopalian Church, being disestablished, has been able to modify and to some measure re-Catholicize itself; whereas the Church of England, being established and subject to the Crown and the will of Parliament, has never been free to resolve the problems of dogma and authority deliberately written into its original constitutions.

Yet this disadvantage of being virtually a Depart-

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ment of State has in another way given the Church of England an immense advantage over those Christian bodies in the country that rejoice in their autonomy. For the Church of England has been identified with the history of the nation-state in a manner from which the Catholic Church has been debarred and Dissenters have debarred themselves. The official Church of an island nation and an insular people, its clergy have baptized the infant Englishman, preached to the mature and consoled the dying for the last four hundred years; its cathedrals display the monuments to heroes of an imperial past, its village churches display those to the squires and peasants of a stable agricultural society; the ecclesiastical buildings appropriated from the Catholic centuries confirm the illusion that the Church of England is indeed the Ancient Church of the Land, as Mr. Betjeman believes, and that other Christian bodies, assembling usually in tasteless makeshift tabernacles, are newcomers of doubtful credit.

HIS ATTITUDE is very English indeed in its emphasis on sentiment rather than reason. The English are pragmatic people with a deep piety towards traditional activities in traditional places. Changes based on conviction rather than necessity are repugnant to them.

In a conversation with him, I asked Mr. Betjeman if he had ever had an attack of Roman Fever, a condition of religious excitement and instability to which High Churchmen are sometimes susceptible. It is not confined to adolescence, and is often recurrent.

He said he never had, and this immunity is an unusual quality. But Mr. Betjeman has others too. When I asked him about Calvinism, he said, "It has a ghastly fascination. All of us, you know, have a lurking conviction that it may be true."

We spoke of the idea of Damnation ("Long tiled London County Council passages and queuing up with dreadful people for all eternity" was his interpretation), and the poet who has cruelly described himself as "bald" (true) "and old" (false) "and green" (depending on the light) started to his feet and exclaimed: "Even so, I'd rather Hell than Nothing!"

This is a heroic sentiment for one of whom Mr. Christopher Hollis, writing recently in *The Month,* says: "Whenever I meet Mr. Betjeman we never dream of talking about anything except Death." Mr. Betjeman's poems creep with the terrors of Death and Eternity, which he first learned from his Calvinistic nurserymaid:

> "World without end." It was not what she'd do
> That frightened me so much as did her fear
> And guilt at endlessness. I caught them too,
> Hating to think of sphere succeeding sphere
> Into eternity and God's dread will.
> I caught her terror then. I have it still.

His London sitting-room windows look out on the time-scoured burial-ground of St. Bartholomew-the-Great, offering him a daily reminder of mortality. His poems rarely offer Hope to mitigate the fear of Hell; what keeps him going, as he said, is "The *fact* of the Incarnation. That for me is central and unshakeable." And his devotional poems focus upon the Sacrament of the Altar, the astounding, consoling Mystery.

As well as being a personal lyricist, Mr. Betjeman is an ecclesiologist in the sense that others are sociologists. In an early poem, "Distant View of a Provincial Town," he plots the four types of Anglicanism found in modern England:

> St. Aidan's with the prickly nobs
> And iron spikes and colored tiles—
> Where Auntie Maud devoutly bobs
> In those enriched vermilion aisles:
>
> St. George's where the matin's bell
> But rarely drowned the trams for prayer—
> No Popish sight or sound or smell
> Disturbed that gas-invaded air:
>
> St. Mary's where the Rector preached
> In such a jolly friendly way
> On cricket, football, things that reached
> The simple life of every day:
>
> And that United Benefice
> With entrance permanently locked—
> How Gothic, grey and sad it is
> Since Mr. Grogley was unfrocked!

IN THIS Anglican geography, St. Aidan's is High, Mr. Betjeman's preference. It is dedicated to a Saint pre-dating the Augustinian mission to England and, in a fantasticated Victorian way, St. Aidan's is beautiful. Mr. Betjeman has a remarkable insight into and sympathy for the aspirations, sufferings and failings of the feminine temperament: worshippers, typists, business women, mothers, beefy games-girls, nymphets in spectacles with bands around their front teeth. (His men are tweedy, insensitive golfers with the souls of real estate agents.) St. Aidan's, in Mr. Betjeman's view, is the church of Auntie Maud—of women.

To go on with the poem's characterizations, St. George's is Low. It is dedicated to the Patron Saint of the State, whose effigy appears on the gold coinage. The Book of Common Prayer is recited unmodified by any influence of the Liturgical Movement. It is as dusty, narrow and dead, without unction or consolation, as a National Insurance Office. It is dominated in spirit by the dread champion of Protestant formalism, Sir Thomas Inskip.

St. Mary's is Broad-Modernist. The games-girls like

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the Rector's sermons and friendly handshake after service. You would never guess on a weekday that the Rector was a parson. The form of service will vary week by week during the summer holidays to take into account the Pony Club Rally and the Regatta.

Last in the Betjeman enumeration, there is the lunatic-fringe church, the United Benefice: eccentric, scandalous, catastrophic. Mr. Grogley has taken to the bottle, been convicted of a "serious offence," invented ceremonies of his own, sold the Sacred Vessels—God knows what irregularities.

In this survey it is worth noting that three of these four churches have, or have had, living souls in them. St. Aidan's has its devoted elderly women, St. Mary's its jovial, extroverted, untheological Rector, even the United Benefice has sheltered the tormented soul of Mr. Grogley; but in St. George's there are no souls, no suspicion of a soul at all. Once these four types of Anglican temple have been distinguished, all Mr. Betjeman's other poems of Anglican *locale* fall into place.

During our talk, I asked Mr. Betjeman at what time in the history of Anglicanism he would most have liked to live. "I am essentially Liberal," Mr. Betjeman said. "The Incarnation is all that really matters to me; but if I could have my choice, I should like to have lived in the latter part of the nineteenth century when the Anglo-Catholic Movement was establishing itself in London in the face of great opposition."

Another heroic aspect of Mr. Betjeman's character is revealed here, the campaigner and crusader. Mr. Betjeman has been fighting with tenacity, charm and success for the last twenty years to preserve England's architectural heritage from the hand of the planster and suburban counter-architect. (Curiously, Mr. Betjeman looks rather like a plaster gnome escaped from a suburban housing estate; he is diffident, illusive, allusive in conversation.) "Buildings earlier than 1840 are more or less safe now," he said. He did not say that their safety is largely due to him, though this is true. His present campaign is for the preservation of the best of nineteenth century architecture.

IT SEEMS that a fifth Anglicanism, beyond the four contemporary types, is found in his work: the idyllic worship of a rural England before the Industrial Revolution severed master from man and Man from Faith; the integrated church life shown in the *Roger de Coverly* papers and nostalgically recalled by Thomas Hardy after the factories had depopulated his Wessex:

Lord's Day bells from Bingham's Melcombe, Iwerne Minister, Shroton, Plush,
Down the grass between the beeches, mellow in the evening hush.
Gloved the hands that hold the hymn-book, which this morning milked the cow—
While Tranter Reuben, Mary Borden, Brian Howard and Harold Acton lie in Mellstock Churchyard now.
Light's abode, celestial Salem! Lamps of evening, smelling strong,
Gleaming on the pitch-pine, waiting, almost empty almost empty evensong:
From the aisles each window smiles on grave and grass and yew-tree boughs—
While Tranter Reuben, Gordon Selfridge, Edna Best and Thomas Hardy lie in Mellstock Churchyard now.

The City churches are far away; we are in the mystical dimension of Anglicanism's pastoral convention. Not surprising, Mr. Betjeman's favorite poets are Cowper, Tennyson and of course Thomas Hardy. He says that he is most influenced by Moore's *Irish Melodies* and *Hymns Ancient and Modern;* he admires the hymns of Heber and Neale, and the devotional poetry of Keble's *Christian Year*.

But his Anglican poems mark a departure from the religious poetry of predecessors: he seems to be the first poet to celebrate the Church of England as institution. Earlier poets wrote as though for all right-thinking Christians everywhere. Betjeman writes consciously within the Anglican schism. His poems, translated into French, do not make sense; English cradle-Catholics find them trivial, obscure and exasperating. For modern Anglicanism is inextricably involved with the relics of class-privilege and social attitudes, of which foreigners have no knowledge and English Catholics no historic share. Mr. Betjeman's poetry has a special appeal to the upper middle-class which he simultaneously flatters and satirizes.

The effect of his work on Anglicans, particularly with the Ecumenical Council looming just ahead? Neither Romanizing nor Romanized, Mr. Betjeman is the first Christian poet to be a bestseller in England since heaven knows when. Byron and Tennyson were the last bestsellers before him, the one a blasphemer, the other a doubter. Is his success merely a phenomenon of the Second Religiousness? "I have a shrewd suspicion," he bashfully remarked to me in another context, "that I am only a lyric writer." But Moore's lyre was powerful to free Ireland. Perhaps the nostalgic, satiric, devout lyre of Mr. Betjeman, breathing in fifty thousand Anglican homes this spring, may mildly shake some conventions too long established to be any longer fruitful, if only on the basis of a personal remorse-stricken armistice at the deathbed of Western Europe:

Protestant claims and Catholic, the wrong and the right of them,
Unimportant they seem in the face of death—
But my neglect and unkindness—to lose sight of them
I would listen even again to the laboring breath.

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He was always willing to accept
the consequences of unpopular opinions

The Political Bernanos

by THOMAS MOLNAR

WE ARE UNABLE as yet to understand the full measure of the man Georges Bernanos, to penetrate his soul, and to size up his impact which is growing and extending beyond Catholic circles and beyond Latin countries. Bernanos is in the forefront, with Paul Claudel and François Mauriac, of contemporary Catholic literature in France, which, since roughly 1910, has been the equal, if not in quantity certainly in originality and significance, of "non-Catholic" literature. In this way, Bernanos has been one of the major influences on a generation of novelists, and has decisively shaped French Catholic sensibilities, particularly of the post-1945 era. However, while penetrating to the very core of Catholic problems and spiritual life, while becoming the novelist of the sacerdotal soul, Bernanos was also—before Mauriac and with a different orientation—a Catholic intellectual, an *engagé,* fighting for causes, never shunning battles, accepting the harsh consequences of an impressive series of unpopular opinions, attitudes, and actions.

The man who had found so soon the truth of his soul, but who found his career with such difficulty, and fame only when he was more than forty years of age, stands before us today as a major literary, even cultural, figure. The *Diary of a Country Priest* has become a classic; his play, *Dialogue des Carmélites,* with Poulenc's music, is a successful opera; his *Les Grands Cimetières sous la lune,* grown out of his indignation with the Civil War in Spain, is the most forceful political pamphlet that has been given to our century.

And still, there are greater and more valid reasons to speak of Bernanos today. If such a thing could at all be stated of a Christian who believes that he is part of the mystical body of Christ, Bernanos could be called an "alienated man," somewhat in the sense in which Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Kafka were alienated. In reality, such a man is the least alienated of all; the fact that he has eyes among the blind makes us think that he does not see; the fact that among modern robots, our de-personalized fellow-men, a man like Bernanos is *free,* makes us believe that he is a saboteur, a strange and backward figure, refusing to join us on our terms.

Thus "alienated," in the case of Bernanos, means a human being with exceptional unity of purpose, intellectual integrity, moral courage and spiritual elevation. Far from being a delicate, fragile, saintly figure, Bernanos was a robust man—his physical misfortunes were always caused by recklessness, accidents, exertions, perhaps by his terrific fits of fury—whose burning, Spanish eyes pierce through his photographs. Nor did he believe that he was in any sense saintly: he was passionate, violent, full of vigor, charging his enemies like a bull. But he had other qualities which made of him a stumbling block for the wise men of this world, the important ones, lay or ecclesiastic, the respected ones, bourgeois or socialist. These qualities are those of an essentially simple, childlike man. A sophisticated analyst of the soul, a writer who knew the secret of impostor priests, innocently wise virgins, dried-up aristocrats, a restless traveler who so easily adjusted his vision to new landscapes, an *ex-camelot du roi,* ex-insurance agent, pamphleteer, public accuser and tireless Cassandra—he was a simple man without an academically sanctioned philosophy.

He *lived* instead. Bernanos had the immediate realism of the French peasant, his concrete feel of life, his understanding of and respect for what *is.* This does not mean something sullen, something that never raises its head; it points, rather, to roots in life—whether in France or in Brazil—to an understanding of human beings undistorted by an ideology, or simply by pessimism and optimism, an understanding which accounts for the incredible insights of the young curé of Ambricourt into the depths of the souls around him. And it shows an almost naive, good-humored satisfaction with life because it is always fascinating.

YET, DRAMA was certainly not absent from his life. First, there were the adventures of the youthful years as a street-fighter among the right-wing *camelots du roi,* battling with the police, spending nights in jail. Then war and the ensuing hardships in a world

Mr. Molnar, a member of the faculty at Brooklyn College, recently completed a book on the political thought of Bernanos, to be published by Sheed & Ward.

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where his talents and independence of mind could not be easily exchanged for a livelihood; the years as an intellectually solitary man, revising some earlier beliefs and loyalties, not a renegade but a suddenly enlightened man; the sufferings for his beloved France, the moral light in the darkness of despair. And finally, during the short years between his return to France and his death, the struggle to open, once more, the eyes of his countrymen, the fiery speeches, the work, the travels.

Throughout these years the accompanying note is an all-consuming violence, not for personal gain or success, but for truth as he saw it: "If I am violent," he wrote in 1939 to his Brazilian friend, Amoroso Lima, "it is to spare others the need to be violent." Likewise in 1947: "People say," he wrote, "that Bernanos is never pleased about anything or anyone. When the righteous were wishing success to the crusade of our good neighbor, Señor Franco, he wrote *Les Grands Cimetières sous la lune,* and protested against being called democratic. Now that all righteous are each more democratic than the others, he still proclaims himself Catholic, and no more democratic than before. A peculiar fellow, that Bernanos."

This quotation and the "violence" of which Bernanos speaks refer to his political opinions and writings. But it is rather difficult, at first sight, to include in the same sentence the name of Bernanos and the term "political." Nothing was farther from his impatient and burning temperament than the meticulousness of the news analyst or the politician's maneuvers between parties, programs, and committees. His domain was, rather, the philosopher's insight and the artist's intuition, the social critic's scorn and wrath, and the prophet's words predicting doom. Why should one, then, speak of the *political thought* of Georges Bernanos?

Hans Urs von Balthasar states that Bernanos' primary interest was "the human person and his integrity; the question of what political system promotes the values of the person was, for him, of secondary importance." Perhaps in another age he would have remained far from politics and political preoccupations. Our time, however, is such that men like Bernanos are inevitably drawn toward an examination and a critique of the *collective conscience* (of a nation, a society, a class or civilization), and this conscience is inevitably expressed through political channels and political terminology. Hence the unbreakable link today between the man of conscience and the community which holds his hopes and fears, his commitment, captive.

This was the case of Bernanos. As he confessed on two or three occasions, he was irresistibly attracted to the political phenomenon—to the point where he was compelled to set aside his literary work, a decision he never ceased deploring, yet could not reverse. He, and his readers, were, however, compensated: of politics he had the same human grasp as of the characters of his novels; the political animal comes alive in his essays and pamphlets, his innermost secrets are probed as is the black heart of Monsieur Ouine or the supernatural joy of Chantal de Clergerie. And not only the political animal in his individuality: also a nation or a class, the corps of high Army officers, diplomat-priests, or the pressure group of shopkeepers: they all are given life, they are impersonated and made protagonists in a drama which is the very core of politics. The extraordinary range of images in which the individual and collective actors are depicted, the dialogues they conduct, the greed, the bafflement, the interests, the corruption, the generosity which mark their consciences, show Bernanos, the writer, at his best, but it also shows him towering above most political writers, in the same class with the great contemporary actors and commentators on great events, de Gaulle and Churchill.

WHAT MAKES the case of Bernanos particularly striking is that his political experience shows an extraordinary transformation under the pressure of his religious faith. Simply stated, his charity curbed his political temperament at a certain moment when all those with similar convictions and principles and a similar ideological background adhered more fully than before to an extremist position. This, the fact that Bernanos overcame what I will call the "Fascist temptation," is an event which has not been given the attention it deserves, probably because the world was soon to witness more spectacular denunciations of a previously embraced political faith by men like Silone, Koestler, Chambers.

But we can never think of Bernanos as an ex-Fascist or a potential Fascist. Naturally, there are readers and commentators who, on the basis of his earlier years, his participation among the *camelots du roi,* his membership in and contribution to *l'Action Française,* his admiration for the anti-Semite Drumont, his friendly rapports with Maurras and Daudet, etc., stamp him a reactionary; there are critics who refer to his earlier writings *(La Grande Peur des Bien-Pensants,* in particular), to his nostalgia for the France of Joan of Arc and of "peasants and knights," to his sharp criticism of the modern "imbeciles," technocrats and progressives, as indisputable symptoms of a "Fascist" mentality.

But the more objective witness, who has even a little of the sympathy he can hardly refuse this man, will look on the Bernanos of the *Curé de Campagne, Les Grands Cimetières sous la lune,* and his wartime writings, and will discover the key to a man who overcame a far more formidable temptation than political

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extremism: the temptation of despair. In an age when literature, art, and politics find the ultimate meaning in meaninglessness, when intellectual fatigue engulfs the private study and the public place, we, readers, are struck by something constant in his spiritual structure, and we must call it his *living faith.*

This was the source of his independence, even vis-a-vis the Church. Did he not say: "I follow truth wherever it leads me, and profess it regardless of the consequences." Bernanos had the highest regard for the clergy and its individual members; witness to this were his teachers, then Dom Besse, the Abbé Pezeril, Father Tauzin, and many others. But this did not stop him from denouncing publicly all the "Eminences, bishops and archbishops" who closed their eyes over the atrocities in Spain, or blessed Mussolini's ruthless campaign in Abyssinia. Since he was a Christian, at home in his Father's House, he considered it his duty to uncover the evils infesting Christian integrity, the stinking wounds in the soul of a priest who had lost his faith (Abbé Cenabre), or to probe the hallucinations of another who caused scandal to many by the startling manifestations of his mysticism (Abbé Donissan).

Yet, as we have begun to see, Bernanos was not at all an "angry man," a ruthless critic; outside his charity which transpires even through his invectives, the main feature of his personality was humanness and joy. I have said how securely he was rooted in life, in God's world; his joy grew out of these roots and was, as a result, a way of looking at the world and at himself in it. This unity of his being, the conviction that he had rights and duties in this world with which he felt an organic kinship, adds a particular flavor to his role as a public figure. Not as a politician, for at no time was he one; but as a Frenchman, with the weight of history and tradition and the wings of the future. A participant in his nation's destiny, not as a listless voting machine, but as one who felt in his blood and fibers the slightest motions of the communal body, and felt, hoped, suffered with it.

IT MUST BE stressed at this point that Bernanos occupies a unique position among the modern critics of society. He was not an *existentialist* recalling his fellow human beings to the austere task of choosing a meaning in an absurd universe; he was not a *neo-humanist* interested in the cultivation of values; he was not a *romantic* denouncing the industrial age for its ugliness and narrow imagination; and he was not a *philosopher of culture* of the Spengler-Toynbee school, measuring and comparing the phases of civilization, and situating the twentieth century on their gigantic graphs.

To be sure, his remarks touched upon all these aspects of the day's cultural criticism; but his originality was elsewhere: all the other analyses of the modern world have an intellectualist approach by which they show themselves symptoms of what they examine and criticize. They are inseparable from the social and cultural milieu which supplies them with the data they study, the methods they use, the frame of reference, and even the ideal they favor. With some simplification, one might say that the systems of contemporary culture-critics and social critics are re-arrangements of the given elements, not their fundamental transformations.

The case of Bernanos is different. He was not an intellectualist and he was not systematic. He did not proceed from firmly and rationally established premises, he did not equip his arguments with the weapons of philosophical analysis, nor was his reasoning surrounded with the guarantees of a rigorous logic. In his essays, Luc Estang writes, "enthusiastic vaticination frequently wins out. His eloquence sets sail, his thought dilutes itself. Bernanos' essays are not distinguished by their dialectical rigor, but by the passion which animates them."

Yet these remarks do not do justice to Bernanos, the thinker, because it is much more than passion that drove his pen. The simplest way to put it is to say that he understood the *spirit* of the phenomena which form the object of his great likes and dislikes; he saw them *sub specie humanitatis* and penetrated their innermost significance. When he attacks the conquest of technology, for example, it is not a carefully documented study that could destroy the flavor of the subject, so to speak, and neutralize it under our intelligence-directed attention. Rather, he attacks it in its roots, in the dead sediments it leaves in the soul, in the transformations it brings about in our thoughts and feelings, in the way it affects our most basic attitudes, our relationship with God, with men, and with ourselves.

In his pleadings for man, for freedom, for individuality, for life as conceived by God, Bernanos does not impress by the number of his arguments, but by the depth of his penetration; to give another example, it is not the duel of man versus the State that he describes, as a competent political scientist would, but the struggle of two principles—and yet how concretely presented!—which seem, under his pen, to contradict each other and to have contradicted each other from all eternity, in the very plan of Creation.

The personality and thinking of Bernanos were, thus, unique because of his blend of temperament, sensibility, and convictions. Few manage to generate enough fire to heat themselves at its side, let alone the fire which was burning in him. It is a cause for rejoicing that such a man lived in this century, and may have balanced with his merits much of its sin and corruption.

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MOTES AND BEAMS

MY FRIEND, William F. Buckley, Jr., has written a new book called *Up from Liberalism* which is going to rouse many liberals to shout all the louder "Down with Buckley!" But no one has a deadlier aim than Mr. Buckley when he has sighted a liberal fallacy or a flaw in the liberal armor, and there are sections in his book which every man who calls himself a liberal should take seriously.

I am thinking particularly of those chapters which have to do with the moral blindness, double standard of behavior, and persistence of self-righteousness found in the American liberal community.

Probably the most impressive example Mr. Buckley cites is the case of Senator Ralph Flanders' eleventh-hour attack on McCarthyism. Now at no time could Senator Flanders be described as a leading American liberal, even though in the world of the *National Review* every non-Communist critic of the right wing is *ipso facto* a liberal. But in the days when Flanders emerged as a critic of McCarthyism, the anti-McCarthy forces were looking for every ally they could find, and, if anything, Senator Flanders was embraced all too tightly by the liberals. So Mr. Buckley is not playing fast and loose when he involves them with the Flanders' case. They asked for it.

Especially did they ask for it when not one person of prominence in the liberal world* chastized Senator Flanders at the time he implied, without submitting a shred of evidence, that an unhealthy sex relationship might have something to do with the mutual loyalty displayed by the McCarthy high command. Later, Flanders compounded his shame. A reporter asked him if he were willing to make the charge explicit. The Senator answered coolly that he was not making any charges, he was only asking questions. It would be difficult to find a more vicious use of hit-and-run in that whole sordid era.

Again, most tellingly, Buckley cites the case of Paul Hughes, a W. C. Fields character who picked up thousands of dollars from several prominent liberals on the promise that he would inform on Senator McCarthy's private activities. Hughes' prize sucker was Joseph L. Rauh, Jr., a leader of Americans for Democratic Action and a notably vocal critic of secret informers and paid witnesses. What is even more significant is that to date, as Mr. Buckley reports with a certain glee, no liberal spokesman has found the courage to denounce Mr. Rauh's connivance with secret informing and undercover private spying.

A third example of liberal sleaziness which Mr. Buckley gives is the national advertisement headed "A Clean Politics Appeal" that was signed by the late Elmer Davis and Archibald MacLeish.

There were a number of things wrong with that ad, and Mr. Buckley does not let a single one pass unnoticed. Most reprehensible of all, of course, was its studied use of the word "clean." This choice of word implied that the candidates endorsed by the ad were being opposed by moral lepers of one kind or another. The same righteous note was struck throughout, so much so that after one read it one might have concluded that the election represented a stark contest between good and evil. Perhaps Mr. MacLeish, a poet, was writing *J. B.* at the time the ad was composed and tended naturally to view even passing political elections in absolutistic terms. But the sober and high-minded men of the Committee for an Effective Congress, which paid for the ad, should have known better.

If Mr. Buckley's book can move liberals to examine their collective conscience on such matters, hurray.

But who is to prod the conservatives of Mr. Buckley's own persuasion? For, haven't we a two-way street here? If the weaknesses Mr. Buckley finds in liberalism are genuine flaws, and I think he has proved that conclusively, surely they do not become virtues when practiced by conservatives. But how often does one see a certified "anti-Communist" criticized in the *National Review?* How many times have conservative writers employed their gifts to soften unpleasant facts or to excuse the inexcusable? How often has discreet silence seemed the better part of wisdom when unfavorable comment about someone identified with neo-conservatism would endanger the cause? As a matter of fact, Mr. Buckley's own book *McCarthy and His Enemies* may be almost a classic example of the kind of double standard which annoys him in the liberals. In that book the authors listed one reprehensible thing after another and then went on to justify them, or to make spurious excuses for them.

The problem, I am afraid, is universal, limited neither to liberals or conservatives, to left wing or right.

We all worry too much about not scandalizing the little ones, though in political life there are not supposed to be any little ones. Our system presumes that conclusions are reached by an informed and conscientious citizenry capable of distinguishing between men and ideas, between the strength of a political position and the weakness of a political figure. When we start lying for the truth or suppressing the little truths so as not to damage the big Truth, we have done more violence to the cause, whatever it be, than any amount of scandal could accomplish.

JOHN COGLEY.

*Unless The Commonweal qualifies. See "McCarthyism Against McCarthy," issue of June 18, 1954.

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THE STAGE

IMAGES

NOTHING dominates so intensely in theater art as the image, persuading us—before words, conceptions, patterns—to the reality of its glamour, its high suffering or lucidity of truth. And nothing so links theater to life as the extravagance with which it too coins images, proposing to our passionate contemplation their ironic diversity.

Consider the image of the young Helen Keller that aches like a wound at the center of Mr. William Gibson's "The Miracle Worker": the child locked in the body's cage against sight, speech, sound, her skin alone a raw key to the world, the very fact of her a majestic rebuke to all easy imaginations of justice and rationality. Mr. Gibson's account of the breaking of that cage—of Anne Sullivan's forceful entry into a demonic world of lawless, feral impulse—is scrupulously sincere and affecting always, what I should call an accomplishment in humane feeling. It touches on the mute, clawing Helen with distinguished pathos, and on her resistance to Miss Sullivan with a tough-minded love. Everywhere, in these passages, the image is close and powerful, beyond analysis in its emotional purity. Elsewhere, the play has no more than a conventional aspect: busy details in realism too insignificant to bear examination. What comes about us finally with the shadow of radiance—in that moment when the broken circuit of speech and thought and sound is healed at last—is something of the fierce joy of expression, of that poet's glory in the power to name God's things in all their first being and beauty. It is the only point at which Mr. Gibson raises his substance to a pitch of impersonal exaltation, but it is overwhelming. Out of hideous darkness into light: the image is completed, and it is all.

As a theater event, "The Miracle Worker" commands no little admiration. It is full of a blunt sweetness in the rendering, the naturally expressive Miss Anne Bancroft bringing to bear her intense, gay compassion on the helpless terror and malignity of the young Miss Patty Duke. I was troubled by so graphic a representation of Miss Sullivan's chastening of the violent Helen: these scenes are not truly dramatic, I think; they verge on emotional obscenity, and they seem to touch the audience as a kind of grotesque lark, like visiting at Bedlam. In justice to Mr. Gibson and his director, Mr. Arthur Penn, I might remark that the spiritual vulgarity of the Broadway audience—its determination to find in all modes of human suffering a trigger for hilarity—has lately reached unmanageable proportions. Whether one may interpret this as a buyer's response to rising ticket prices ("Listen!"—plaintively or defiantly—"for $6.90 I gotta have a few *laughs!*"), as self-defense against a surfeiting of stage pain, or merely as the want of good breeding, who shall say? It makes, however, a disturbing comment on contemporary states of sensibility and natural piety.

Mr. Gibson's play has taken the town, yet what will defeat the legitimate impulse and distinction of "The Miracle Worker" is, of course, to value it immoderately. I am most anxious to be understood on this point, not as a critical harpy, nor out of perversity, but in justice to those possibilities of theater which Mr. Gibson, quite honorably and doubtless with intent, does not even explore. The triumph of Miss Keller, the will and devotion of Miss Sullivan, are moral splendors of human history, very much on the order of Franklin Roosevelt's conquest of paralysis. They are intrinsically dramatic; they challenge that supine acquiescence by which we defend ourselves against the fact of ostensibly irremediable fatality. They are, if you will, "affirmations of the human spirit."

To attempt their translation into art, however—or something very like it—is rarely, indeed never, quite satisfying, because in no central way does it invoke the transfiguring power of the imagination. One recognizes the content of the moment, of the experience, but is released into nothing else: essentially it is a *fact* to which one has responded. That the fact may be a gratifying demonstration of human worth is, in itself, aesthetically irrelevant. Hence, while recording pleasure in "The Miracle Worker," gratitude for the image of goodness with which it augments our moral life, in no sense can I think it a significant play, and its reception as such will add only further confusion to that wondrous babel of standards which is opinion in our theater. *(At the Playhouse.)* RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

IT'S SO BEAUTIFUL IN THE COUNTRY

IT'S a pleasure to report on a well-made film that will appeal to youngsters and oldsters alike. Starring the singing teen-age idol, Fabian, and having the unlikely title, "Hound Dog Man," the movie turns out to be a delightful surprise. In the first place Producer Jerry Wald and Director Don Seigel cast and use Fabian well. He does not play the lead and title role; in an unassuming and sincere enough performance, he portrays a young fellow who, along with his still younger brother (Dennis Holmes), idolizes the Hound Dog Man. Part of their worship of this shiftless bachelor, who spends a great deal of his time hunting with his pack of dogs and refuses to settle down to one woman and raising a family, is

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due to the boys' father (Arthur O'Connell) being so busy with his farm that he has little time for them. Some of their regard for the hunter is due to the man's charm, much of which stems from Stuart Whitman's winning personality and good acting.

Beautifully photographed in De Luxe Color and CinemaScope, "Hound Dog Man" is particularly successful in capturing the feel of the great outdoors when the two boys go with their mentor on a hunting trip of several days. Their adventures in the woods and along the streams in this lovely Southern country are full of nature lore, excitement and humor. Thanks to the good script of Fred Gipson and Winston Miller (based on Gipson's novel), the dialogue, besides being peppered with you-alls, is earthy and real, and the situations are lively and convincing. During the course of the story, Fabian (who's not too Presley) sings every now and then, and the songs are well integrated into the picture's themes, especially those sung at the barn dance. Also in the large cast skillfully handled by Don Siegel are Carol Lynley, as the attractive young girl who finally subdues the Hound Dog Man without breaking his spirit, Betty Field, as Fabian's strict mother, Dobie Stevens, Jane Darwell, Royal Dano, L. Q. Jones, and others who contribute effective portraits to this display of backwoods Americana. At the end, happily, Fabian's hero-worshipping eyes turn from the Hound Dog Man to his own father.

ALSO TRYING to catch the atmosphere of open spaces in many of its scenes is "The Miracle," which turns out to be a studio-bound picture, contrived from beginning to end. Americans who saw Max Reinhardt's beautifully staged production in 1924 will remember that this spectacle, based on Karl Vollmoeller's play, had lovely Lady Diana Manners as the statue of the Virgin that comes to life and takes the place of a nun who runs away from the convent. It was an elegant and impressive pageant. The movie, which now has a script and a lot of dialogue by Frank Butler, is also a kind of pageant. But, although handsome enough in its big scenes, spread in Technicolor on a Technirama screen, the intimate story fails to come through in its unfortunate mixture of styles.

The movie is set in Spain during the Napoleonic invasion, where a young postulant (played by Carroll Baker in a strangely wooden and detached manner) leaves her convent to run after a handsome British Dragoon (Roger Moore). The Madonna of Miraflores steps out of her niche to take the postulant's place, and the plot then wanders far and wide, almost forgetting the religious aspect which is, presumably, the whole point of the story. Thinking her dragoon is dead, Miss Baker takes refuge with some gypsies and becomes engaged to their matriarch's son (Vittorio Gassman). He is killed through the treachery of his jealous brother, and she then goes to Madrid with a gypsy musician (Walter Slezak), becomes a cafe singer and wins the attention and amorous glances of a bullfighter (Gustavo Rojo) and an aristocrat (Dennis King) who starts her on the road to fame as an entertainer. When the bullfighter is killed in the ring, she goes on a singing tour of Europe's capitals and by 1815 she is in Brussels. Her long-lost dragoon turns up and they fall in love all over again; but when he hears the call to duty at an elaborate military ball and leaves for Waterloo, she is convinced that everyone who loves her dies. At the end, the plot finally gets back to its religious theme when Carroll returns to the convent to take her place as a nun and the Statue can go back to the niche. It is odd that Producer Henry Blanke, whose last production was the beautifully made and thoughtful "The Nun's Story," should have done such a superficial job with "The Miracle." His picture has its spectacular moments and it is not disrespectful of things religious; it is just empty, and its two-hour running time seems endless.

AFTER BEING refused a seal by the Production Code Administration and then being granted one by the Code's Review Board, who reversed the earlier decision, "Happy Anniversary" is now shown far and wide. It is unfortunate that this tasteless and mediocre movie is gaining such undeserved attention. Its script, written by Joseph Fields and Jerome Chodorov from their play "Anniversary Waltz," has almost no plot, but it has a series of gags. Some of these gags are very funny; most of them are presented with snide snickers, built as they are around the fact that the husband and wife (now celebrating their thirteenth wedding anniversary) slept together during the year before their marriage.

The husband thinks he's pretty cute when, at the anniversary party, he tells his in-laws (Loring Smith, Phyllis Povah) about this; but he doesn't realize his own young son and daughter (Kevin Coughlin, Patty Duke) are listening; and he gets his comeuppance later when the little girl, on a T.V. panel with and for children, announces to the whole world the fact of her parents' premarital relations. David Miller, who directed this old-fashioned comedy in an old-fashioned way, thinks the joke is pretty riotous and plays it to the hilt. The cast do too. And, since it has little else to sell, the movie's advertisement does, too, with its announcement of David Niven and Mitzi Gaynor "in a story of togetherness . . . before and after marriage," its picture of Master Coughlin and Patty Duke saying, "They understand these things and accept them much better in France," and its pride that this is "The first comedy actually filmed in SinemaScope." Anyone going to this movie should know pretty well what to expect.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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PEACE AND PEACE MONGERS

MUCH, TOO MUCH, of the peace propaganda beating about the country is concerned not with peace but with war. This peace mongering is different from pacifism, resembling it hardly more than Khrushchev resembles Dorothy Day. The two are, perhaps, closely enough related so that peace mongers can exploit pacifism, but they are so essentially unlike that pacifism cannot use peace mongering without losing its rational and moral and religious meaning.

Peace has a structure and order and "internal logic." Its foundation is individual, personal peace; and upon that base social peace is built, which sustains the peace of states and nations. On earth all this is bound to be relative, and people know it is relative. We have implanted within us a consciousness of absolute peace and yearning for it, which can be experienced only in heaven. With many meanings, the world is the realm of the Church Militant.

Peace mongers attack the foundation of peace in the individual personality, and so they work for war. Their concentration and concern are focused on physical violence . . . negation. They describe past wars in artistically dreadful terms. Present wars they generally and quite significantly underplay or fail to recognize at all. The future war is where they prefer to dwell. By this time their vision of the future war has passed through speculative stages to reach an awesome blank: it is total destruction, literal chaos: their war is "intolerable" and "unthinkable"—especially the last.

All this works for frustrating anxieties and panicky fears which disorder mind and emotion. The servile abnegation of judgment and will and responsibility would be its fruit, which, far from providing peace, produces a wild and violent volatility. In the currently best-selling novel, *Advice and Consent,* Allen Drury presents a figure of the condition in the fictional Senator Fred Van Ackerman. This unstable demagogue is reported addressing a great rally of the organization, COMFORT (Committee On Making Further Offers for a Russian Truce): "I say I had rather crawl to Moscow than die under a bomb!" (Hysterical cheers of COMFORT partisans from Coast to Coast.) This episode is supposed to be slightly burlesque, slightly didactic. In the context of real life the burlesque is not reassuringly broad, but the message, one hopes, comes through. A demoralized people, even if they abjectly tried, would not really succeed in crawling to peace. More likely they would trample each other to death in their vicious panic.

Peace mongers propose hypothetical questions about peace which they themselves then answer by theorizing about the degrees of violence involved in wars to avoid. But in defining peace, more terms are needed than the explosive power and fall-out intensity of nuclear weapons which are not being used. Peace can be the victim of many ills besides the trampling of marching armies. No living and lasting peace can be built on any negative terms at all. Peace resides in a positive conscience and intellect and will.

Here is where the peace mongers and their allies, conscious and unconscious, capitalize a powerful campaign of the flattest materialism. Life and happiness are presented as the effective exploitation of physical Nature. Ultimate life and ecstasy consist in the most successfully engineered mining of the material universe: riches untold for you and me and every coolie, *fellah* and tribesman, with our chemistry and nerves doctored to produce the maximum delectation. Alternatively, with "the bomb," physical destruction and the death of the body are final: being itself is wiped out with the mathematical alteration of matter. The first duty is to stay alive, and the second is to cooperate progressively, under any circumstances, in harnessing the wealth of earth and all the stars.

(Pious children used to be taught that it would be better for the world to come to an end and for all the stars to fall out of the heavens than that one small child should deliberately commit one venial sin.)

The mental and nervous paralysis induced by such propaganda tends to leave the field of responsibility more and more burnt out and vacant. People are scared away from the personal intellectual and moral problems which underlie those of peace and war, and are driven by terror to look for expert rescuers. These experts are presumably supposed to rationalize the cowed peoples and to arrange the national bargains and deals which will bring the richest proportion of wealth to violence. This is a false peace program.

Several kinds of faith appear necessary to avoid ludicrous pride and to approach the beginnings of peace. We did not create the universe nor the Milky Way nor even the earth and we don't sustain them in being. Mankind itself, in whose history we are undoubtedly implicated, still has a final governance infinitely above our power and understanding. No man will decide its destiny. We do not even know the full consequences of our own most limited actions. Peace can only begin when a person recognizes this, and still decides and acts truthfully according to the best lights given him, leaving the outcome to God. Should a person wilfully act by a worse standard in order to preserve mankind and, perchance, the universe? This is a perverse and blasphemous question.

PHILIP BURNHAM.

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COMMUNICATIONS

"ONE MAN'S FIX"

Fresno, Calif

TO THE EDITORS: In "One Man's Fix" [Nov. 6] author Dan Wakefield did not discuss one solution for many drug addicts' problems carried on in many European nations since shortly after the close of World War I with considerable success.

In these countries, physicians attached to governmental clinics for narcotics addicts give them daily doses of the particular drug to which each is habituated. The cost to the user is the equivalent of about twenty-five cents a day. In the case of some addicts, a long and gradual withdrawal program results in cures. Most patients remain addicts all their lives, even to extreme old age, while holding jobs or carrying on a business or professional career.

Addicts too poor to pay for the services of a private physician are invited to make themselves known to these clinics. At a given clinic, he or she is given a card containing his or her photograph and fingerprints. The addict presents this card daily, and is given the exact dosage required in the judgment of the physician. An addict caught purchasing additional narcotics elsewhere is liable to a long prison sentence, as is the person who sells them.

But most addicts do not "cheat on the clinic." Each knows that a team at the clinic continuously studies his or her case. These teams are made up of a physician, psychiatrist, social worker and a clergyman—priest, minister or rabbi, according to each addict's religious affiliation.

Few of these addicts ever gravitate to the criminal class. That many do in the U.S. is because users become "pushers" (peddlers) of dope to get money to buy dope for themselves from underworld racketeers, most of whom are *not* addicts. The cost is about a hundred times what the same supply would cost over a prescription counter. A month's supply that might cost $4 on prescription costs the addict nearer $400 when bought from a racketeer. . . . That is why so many hold-ups are committed. Unable to afford private medical care, and thus unable to secure drugs cheaply via prescription, it is the exorbitant cost that drives most addicts to crime, including the crime of recruiting new users.

I learned this and much more about the billion dollar drug racket in 1953 from Father Lawrence Farrell of Monterey, Calif., then chaplain of the state prison at Soledad, Calif. He had talked, over a period of years, with many inmates who had been addicts, and had read exhaustively on the subject. In an interview with him published in the Dec. 25, 1953 issue of the *Central California Register* (and republished in the March, 1954, *Catholic Digest*) he told me of the European narcotics clinics, and urged that similar ones be established—or rather re-established in American cities. He said:

"Such clinics were established in various U.S. cities in 15 states in 1919 and 1920, and the results were promising, to say the least. In 1921 the Federal government arbitrarily forced practically all of them to close. This was done because of a purely advisory leaflet containing recommendations by four physicians constituting a committee of the A.M.A.

"The leaflet said that drug addicts ought to be confined (i.e. jailed) during treatment. Many physicians just as reputable, and also members of the A.M.A., strongly disagreed with the A.M.A. committee. Moreover, Congress at no time ever authorized closing those clinics. It was a bureaucratic move, and it has had large scale tragic results."

Closing the clinics, and the growing public belief ever since that *all* drug addicts are criminals, instead of sick men and women, marked the beginning, Father Farrell said, of alarming year-to-year increases in illegal narcotics traffic, major crime and teen-age addiction. He thinks re-establishment of such clinics, now needed throughout the nation, would reduce the number of addicts by almost eliminating incentives to commit hold-ups and/or recruit new users. In time this would make it unprofitable for narcotics racketeers to ply their seamy trade, now bringing them upward of a billion dollars a year.

But in the meantime, opposition to such clinics by the A.M.A. has increased and crystallized. Their principal objection seems to be that such clinics would mark a dangerous step toward socialized medicine. Yet it undoubtedly costs federal, state and local governments far more to detect, arrest, prosecute and keep in jails an increasing crop of criminal addicts.

If the national health and safety were jeopardized by the steel strike, are they not even more jeopardized by the present approach to drug addiction? . . . .

TED LE BERTHON.

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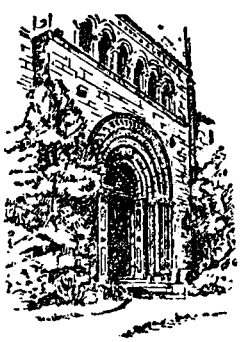

Prospective students should make early application

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Critics' Choices for Christmas

WILLIAM CLANCY

SCIENCE, Religion and Christianity. By Hans Urs von Balthasar. Newman. $3.50. The challenge for religion in our age (as in any age) is relevance: how shall religion "discern the times"? No contemporary Catholic theologian is more passionately aware of this challenge than Hans Urs von Balthasar. God does not change, but the "style" in which each age can apprehend Him does; and so, Father Urs von Balthasar insists, "the contemporary concept of God, too, has a style which the Christian ought to recognize and in which he ought to express himself. And he should do this not only from without, diplomatically and apologetically, but from within: as a child of the age who shares its situation, its needs and abundance, and who yet knows how to draw from the treasure of God's revelation entrusted to him 'new things and old.' "

Theology of Culture. By Paul Tillich. Oxford. $4 and *Religion and Culture: Essays in Honor of Paul Tillich. Edited by Walter Leibrecht. Harper. $7.50.* The work of relevance which Hans Urs von Balthasar is exploring for Catholicism is also the work of Paul Tillich within Protestantism. In these two volumes a meeting between religion and modern man takes place and, after reading them, one understands better than before why Tillich is widely regarded as *the* theologian of the twentieth century. He enters deeply into its anguish and doubt and finds there meaning in terms of man's ultimate concern.

The Structure of Nations and Empires. By Reinhold Niebuhr. Scribner's. $5. Dr. Niebuhr fears that "the novelties and striking historical emergents of a nuclear age threaten to obscure the lessons drawn from the constant factors in history, not only in our nation but in the whole of our generation." In this new work Niebuhr examines the world's present divisions in the light of humanity's past experiences and finds there some basis for hope, if only both sides in the Cold War can overcome the fanaticism that is based on abstractions. This is a work of great historical and theological insight.

The Riddle of Roman Catholicism. By Jaroslav Pelikan. Abingdon. $4. Professor Pelikan's book is addressed primarily to Protestants but it should be read, with profit and gratitude, by Catholics too. This volume is not a polemic; it is an honest, often searching exploration of doctrinal differences and represents the best fruit of the new American encounter between Protestant and Catholic thought. It is remarkable not only for its learning but also for its charity, and I hope that it gains the "inter-faith" audience it deserves.

Saint Simon at Versailles. Edited by Lucy Norton. Harper. $6. When the young Duc de Saint Simon went to the court of the aging Louis XIV, he determined to record every significant detail of the Sun King's final years. The result (as everyone knows) is a narrative which, in its detailed magnificence, meanness, wit, pathos and tragedy is unparalleled in Western literature. Miss Norton has given us a new translation and selection from the diaries, and once again the panorama unfolds before us. Surely these memoirs will be forgotten, or lose their endless fascination, only when civilization itself is gone.

JAMES FINN

SCIENCE, Religion and Christianity. By Hans Urs von Balthasar. Newman. $3.50. There are in any age only a few learned voices that speak with a pertinence that is immediately apparent, few truly contemporary voices that have the fullness of an internalized tradition. Father Urs von Balthasar is of that select company. His knowledge is broad, his insight keen, and his grasp of the "human situation" in our time is sure.

Prudence. By Josef Pieper. Pantheon. $2.75. The first of the cardinal virtues and the most recent of Pieper's studies. Those familiar with his previous work on Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance will expect and welcome the incisive, scholarly and persuasive meditation of this philosopher.

American Catholics. Edited by Philip Scharper. Sheed and Ward. $3.75. A candid look at American Catholics by informed, and frequently aroused, Protestants and Jews. Those Catholics who ask for serious participation in a dialogue among Americans of different faiths will find here material for thought, discussion and, one hopes, further fruitful dialogue. Catholics will not agree with all that is said here, of course, and they may sometimes be startled and stung. But if this were not the case there would be little need for their voice in the discussion.

Malcolm. By James Purdy. Farrar, Straus. $3.95. A wild and witty, zany and controlled story that deals with an adolescent set loose among the oddities of our culture. This novel, which seems to derive its force from a contained hysteria, is an original among today's many copies.

RICHARD GILMAN

THE Last Essays of Thomas Mann. Knopf. $4.50. Intuition reverie, myth-making, combined with exactness of critical perception and lambent exegesis, in rediscoveries of Schiller, Goethe, Nietzsche, Chekhov.

The Empire City. By Paul Goodman. Bobbs-Merrill. $6.95. A hurly-burly novel, really a history of the imagination beside itself and of the sensibility craving community because it's cold outside.

The Poorhouse Fair. By John Updike. Knopf. $3.50. A mineral-hard novel, precise as snow-crystals, about the world seen through the crows-feet and narrowly spaced fingers of the aged.

The New Literature. By Claude

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Mauriac. Braziller. $4. On recent writing in France, by a critic who is less a judge than an accomplice.

The Notebook of Malte Laurids Brigge. By Rainer Maria Rilke. Putnam. $1.15. A perennially astonishing book, a legend of the artist, the city and the chimera, and of the birth consummated among them. I must add that this is a recent reprint which affirms the value of paperbacks.

MICHAEL HARRINGTON

HENDERSON the Rain King. By Saul Bellow. Viking. $4.50. I think that Bellow has advanced in this novel technically. It's better than *Augie March* and, to my mind, makes its author one of the most hopeful talents in the United States.

Culture and Society. By Raymond Williams. Columbia University Press. $5. This brilliant study of last century's tradition of cultural analysis in England and of contemporary writers (the essay on Orwell is an interesting minority view) is a needed antidote to some of the mass-culture theory that is hypnotizing many American intellectuals.

The Prophet Unarmed. By Isaac Deutscher. Oxford University Press. $9.50. I disagree fundamentally and basically with Deutscher's political analysis of Communism (and it is very much between the lines in this study), yet this second volume of the Trotsky biography is a fascinating piece of scholarship. And the author, a native of Poland, has a style well above the run of historical scholars.

The Causes of World War III. By C. Wright Mills. Simon & Schuster. $3.50. This book is less incisive than it should be on the subject of Communism, yet it is of considerable importance: it points out what so many Americans have not yet noticed, that the international roof is falling in.

Freud: The Mind of the Moralist. By Philip Rieff. Viking. $6. Rieff's study is a brilliant appreciation of one of the intellectual makers of the modern world. Its use of sociological insight to deepen psychological perception makes for a particularly rewarding approach.

RICHARD HAYES

TESTAMENT. By John Fandel. Sheed & Ward. $.95. With this collection—the initial volume in a splendid Sheed & Ward venture of paperbound poetry—Mr. John Fandel's lyric impulse comes into elegance and security of statement; his images of the turning natural world bear all the weight he would have them carry as metaphors of the spirit possessing its experience in tenderness and clarity.

The Vision of Tragedy. By Richard B. Sewall. Yale. $4. Mr. Sewall approaches a limitless theme with unimpeachable learning, genuine involvement and what I can only call a kind of magnanimous humility. His book seems to me one of the most succinct and persuasive guides to the nature of tragic reality that American scholarship has produced.

Water Music. By Bianca Van Orden. Harcourt, Brace. $3.95. Miss Van Orden's musically figured variation on the international theme conveys, with hard swift gaiety, a bracing shock of present reality: moral, economic, sexual, social and artistic. It is one of the singular performances of the last decade in new American fiction, and its neglect, by its publishers as well as the literary press, is another comment on the complacent dullness of our "official" intellectual culture.

Tempo Di Roma. By Alexis Curvers. McGraw-Hill. $4.50. The sensuous stir of M. Curvers' prose moves about the Roman scene, dramatizing its heightened fantasy and melancholy hedonism in a picaresque novel of curious nobility. *Tempo di Roma* could be the work only of a good European, where *Water Music* would be unimaginable as other than American; to Miss Van Orden's ironic classicism, Mr. Curvers counterpoints a romantic tenderness distilled subtly out of wisdom, responsibility and grace.

The Eccentric Design. By Marius Bewley. Columbia. $4. Mr. Bewley's study defines, in most graceful and solid prose, that 'architecture of American sensibility' which constitutes the style—as form and experience—of our classic native fictions. His extension of the critical inquiry into political theory seems to me Mr. Bewley's most brilliant advance, while his considerations of Henry James emerge as the only substantial amplifications to our sense of that novelist within recent memory.

Middlemarch. By George Eliot. Grove. $3.50. I came late to George Eliot's massive analysis of the political reality of selfhood, and I cannot imagine a more instructive adventure in the possibilities of spiritual refinement, as well as in the resources of the novel. Only wonder is permitted at the compassionate justice of this mind, awe at its power to support the whole weight and variety and tragic cost of culture: these, and a sharp resentment of the diminished image of society allowed us by our own fiction.

JEAN HOLZHAUER

AMERICAN Catholic Dilemma: An Inquiry into the Intellectual Life. By Thomas F. O'Dea. Sheed & Ward. $3. One of the most comprehensive and, for the layman, intelligible, examinations of the title subject, by an informed and sympathetic sociologist. Mr. O'Dea's inquiry leads him to several intelligent conclusions about the climate and mental substructure of American Catholicism, as well as to some of the causes. A "must" for Catholics trying to get their bearings in their new world.

Questions of Precedence. By François Mauriac. Translated by Gerard Hopkins. Farrar, Straus & Cudahy. $3.50. An early (1921) Mauriac work, newly available to American readers. Although clearly foreshadowing such later books as *A Woman of the Pharisees* and *The Mask of Innocence,* this novel has nonetheless an eccentric and romantic vitality that gives it great charm in itself.

Spinster. By Sylvia Ashton-Warner. Simon & Schuster. $3.75. A Russian girl, arbitrarily set down in an outpost New Zealand school, where she is a kindergarten teacher, among a wide range of adults and children, whites and Maoris; perhaps most importantly, in a com-

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plicated oedipal situation which she nearly understands. Mrs. Ashton-Warner's sight is that of an artist with a good camera, her perception is deep. An unusually effective novel.

Memento Mori. By Muriel Spark. Lippincott. $3.95. A gay, penetrating and rather wicked study of some old friends, who find that their lifelong problems and relationships are helped not a whit toward solution by experience. As their mean age is roughly seventy, all this resolves into a witty and foreboding commentary. A novel.

The Poorhouse Fair. By John Updike. Knopf. $3.50. Another fictional consideration of the aged. Mr. Updike's elder citizens are no wiser than Mrs. Spark's, and considerably less polished, but their credibility is unassailable and often nearly unbearable. The book is really an extended prose poem; it gets near the root of old age, but more importantly, of existence.

RICHARD HORCHLER

THE House of Intellect. By Jacques Barzun. Harper. $5. With the confidence of an eighteenth-century encyclopedist, Mr. Barzun proceeds to chart the life of the mind in the modern world—a most discouraging enterprise. Beneath his amiably popular style flows a ruthless commitment to the aristocracy of intellectual merit; beneath the imperturbability of his classic moderation lies a passionate conviction of the power of the intellect. If Mr. Barzun had the lever and the fulcrum, he might well tell us, he could move the world.

The House of Intellect is irritating, enlightening, uplifting and—to me—convincing on every point except the fundamental ones.

The Cool World. By Warren Miller. Little, Brown. $3.75. Seekers after sociological truth will find much of it in this novel of the real world of a Harlem juvenile delinquent. Juvenile delinquency, racial discrimination, dope addiction, family disintegration, the effects of urban decay—it's all here. Less specialized seekers will find much that is moving, terrifying and humbling.

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Mr. Miller knows the "cool world," in his mind and all five senses, and he makes us know it in expertly crafted language and characterizations. A modest book in scope and pretension, and not without its jarringly false notes, particularly in the resolution, this is yet an extraordinary achievement—in perception, in understanding, and in sheer writing ability.

Advertisements for Myself. By Norman Mailer. Putnam. $5. Mr. Mailer's latest is arrogant, attitudinizing, relentlessly profane and scatological. This curiously but precisely named collection is nevertheless filled with insights and discoveries, even in the midst of all the outrageousness. It is also filled with an impressive array of styles and grades of writing.

The subject matter of the pieces is beyond categorization. They are all about life, love, art, civilization and its discontents—and, obviously and endlessly, the psyche of their way-out author.

The Complete Greek Tragedies. Edited by David Grene and Richard Lattimore. University of Chicago Press. $20. (Before Christmas the price is $16.95.) To cite this work is an act of cultural piety; yet surely such acts should not be neglected. The complete re-translation of all the extant tragedians is a notable achievement for any age, and perhaps particularly for one which deals so largely in the *ersatz.*

Scrupulous scholarship, poetic genius, even the bookbinder's art, have combined here to give us these noble works pre-eminently for use and for pleasure. The critical commentaries and the versions themselves—by various young scholars —are fresh, unpretentious, above all, functional.

J. N. MOODY

UNITY, 1942-1944. By Charles de Gaulle. Simon and Schuster. $6. This is the second volume of the war memoirs of the President of France. In the same lively style and lofty sentiments of its predecessor, it picks up the story with the commitment of the American forces to the battle in North Africa and carries it to the *Te Deum* in Notre Dame Cathedral while firing still goes on in the city. De Gaulle's duel with Churchill and F.D.R. reaches a climax during this period when the Frenchman established himself as the symbol of resistance but lacked the forces to win his demand for equal partnership. These volumes are an important clue to a dominant figure of our time.

The Age of Democratic Revolution. By R. R. Palmer. Princeton University Press. $7. An examination of the revolutionary movements in Western Europe from 1760 until the first explosions of the French Revolution. Conceived as the first of a two volume study by the outstanding American scholar in the field, it searches for the common ideas, needs, and situations between the American Revolution and the contemporary movements in Europe. While describing distinctive elements in each, it finds the basis of conflict in a clash between the older society based on hereditary elites and a new form professing social mobility and legal equality.

The A.F. of L. from the Death of Gompers to the Merger. By Philip Taft. Harper & Bros. $7.50. The second and concluding volume of an excellent history of the leading federation in the American labor movement. Drawn from the archives of the federation, it is balanced and readable as it traces the movement through the period of its greatest growth and greatest crises. As in the former volume, the author is cognizant of the Catholic contribution.

The Image Industries. By William F. Lynch. S.J. Sheed & Ward. $3.50. The author has anticipated the recent T.V. investigations and has deepened the inquiry by exploring the danger that what our contemporaries see on the screens will confuse fantasy with reality and blur the true issues that each must face. The author argues that the manipulators of popular entertainment enjoy a near monopoly over popular culture and cannot evade their responsibility by "giving the people what they want."

Is Theology a Science? By M. D. Chenu. Hawthorn. $2.95. American Catholic commentators have been vocal in asking our theologians to be more alert to the needs of the time. To clarify the demand, this well-written book discusses the role theology ought to play. The learned French Dominican proposes that theology does not diminish faith, but allows the believing intelligence to develop its own scientific spirit. For those who have not discovered the Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Catholicism, this volume would serve as a useful introduction.

BERNARD MURCHLAND

SCIENCE, Religion and Christianity. By Hans Urs von Balthasar. Newman. $3.50. Few religious-philosophical writings of our day manifest a spiritual depth and intellectual vision as persuasive as this work, the first to be translated into English, of an important Swiss thinker. Father Urs von Balthasar takes the changes and aspirations of modern culture seriously; he is aware that man has reached a new stage of his religious development; and, above all, he is convinced that Christianity has some relevance to the current situation of man in the world. God, he has no hesitation in saying, must be interpreted anew. "The contemporary concept of God, too, has a style which the Christian ought to recognize and in which he ought to express himself. And he should do this not only from without, diplomatically and apologetically, but from within: as a child of the age who shares its situation, its needs and abundance, and yet who knows how to draw from the treasure of God's revelation entrusted to him 'new things and old.' By interpreting them rightly he will help both himself and his time." A final chapter entitled "The Sacrament of the Brother" is a compelling re-affirmation of the obvious substance of the new dispensation: love!

Protestant Thought. By Karl Barth. Harper. $7. This is also an important piece of religious-philosophical writing, although in a different key: a foremost Protestant theologian analyzes and assesses

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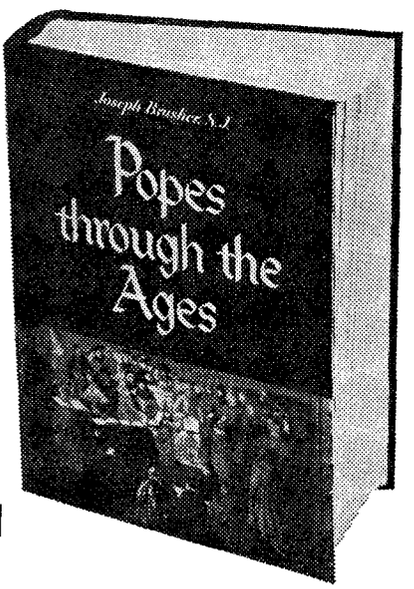
some foremost Protestant thinkers —Rousseau, Lessing, Kant, Herder, Novalis, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Feuerbach, Strauss, and Ritschl. A large order, to be sure, but a large mind is at work. Barth introduces his study with a sketch of the mentality of eighteenth-century man. Each of the subjects he analyzes is finally assessed in terms of the dominant characteristics of that mentality: a tendency to absolutism, a conviction that the self-awareness of man is superior to all that is not human, a buoyant faith that this was the best of all possible worlds, and a deistic religiosity. The innermost heart of the eighteenth-century, writes Barth, "was precisely this idea of man as one taking hold of everything about him and subjecting it to his will." His final assessment seems to be this: the eighteenth century may not have reached the heights of its own idea of itself; but it is still very much with us.

Diplomacy in a Changing World. Edited by Stephen Kertesz and M. A. Fitzsimons. University of Notre Dame Press. $7.50. The latest volume in a continuing series of books on international relations. The several contributors conspire to give a rounded picture of the conditions in which diplomats today have to operate: conditions which constitute a radical departure from the classical bilateral and conference negotiations of the European aristocracy. Two political facts, especially, characterize the new world situation: the superpowers represented by Russia and the United States and their rivalry that engulfs the globe; secondly, the emergence of democratic self-rule in the Americas, Asia and Africa. The resultant political situation is a complicated and many-faceted one. This book does as much as any single work can to align the issues and indicate some solutions.

The War Lover. By John Hersey. Knopf. $5. Hersey skillfully reconstructs two phenomena that are perhaps too rapidly fading from man's memory: the B-17 bombers (as well as the men who flew them) and World War II. As an anatomical portrayal of the Flying Fortresses his novel is without peer; and although he succeeds less well in portraying the flyers—leaving large gaps in their personalities and padding them out with dialogue and impulses that are not always creditable—he nevertheless succeeds in linking artistically two large-scale maladies: war and neurosis. A masterful performance if not quite a masterpiece.

Blaise Pascal: The Life and Work of a Realist. By Ernest Mortimer. Harper. $4. In these existential days a competent study of one of the greatest existentialists of all is indeed welcome. Mortimer, an Anglican clergyman, gives us a scholarly and devoted study of a great spirit. Before the existentialists Pascal *was,* so to speak. Before Kierkegaard he protested the systematizing of man; before Newman he was convinced that religious truth "not by any single-line chain of reasoning but by the centripetal and simultaneous influence of different sorts of testimony, supporting each



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other and converging upon the central truth to which they pointed"; before Sartre journeyed deep into the abyss of the *néant,* Pascal had already exclaimed "Quelle chimère est donc que l'homme!" Withal, Mortimer well points out, he was a Christian and therefore a man of hope.

The Early Liturgy. By Josef Jungmann, S.J. University of Notre Dame Press. $5. The history of the liturgy, says the noted Father Jungmann in his introduction to this study of the early liturgy until the time of Gregory the Great, perhaps more than any other study, has a practical bearing upon the present. The liturgy of the Catholic Church is an edifice in which we are still living today, and in essentials it is the same building in which Christians were already living ten or fifteen or even eighteen and more centuries ago. The author laments our defective knowledge of those centuries as well as a hampering lack of sources. But much progress has been made in this field of research in recent times and Father Jungmann has pieced the evidence together in what will probably come to be regarded a classic on the subject.

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LEO R. WARD

THE Status Seekers. By Vance Packard. McKay. $4.50. As a kind of super-reporter, Packard makes us take quite a look at ourselves, and what we see is not always what we thought was there. Part of Saul Alinsky's *Reveille for Radicals* in 1945 did much the same thing, but Packard stops with the report: on Jews as separatists, on levels of Protestant churches and within various churches, on colored people as avoided everywhere, on the college-bred as snobs, on money as our chief mark of distinction.

Degrees of Knowledge. By Jacques Maritain. Scribner. $7.50. Some experts rate Maritain as the number one philosopher of the century and this as his greatest work. It is of course a difficult work to read, studying scientific, philosophical, and mystical knowledges. This new translation, done with great care, was long awaited.

Human Nature and the Human Condition. By Joseph Wood Krutch. Random House. $3.95. The Modern Temper, 1929, *The Measure of Man,* 1954, and this new work are Krutch's trilogy on man and freedom and human values. They add up to something relevant, suave, easy in style, sceptical, and a trifle dark and pessimistic. The author sees problems everywhere in our actual life and in our assumptions. He keeps pointing out dilemmas and paradoxes. By this time he flatly rejects the mere mores as standards of good and evil and is aware that two basic questions are at the center of our riddle: the destiny of man and the nature of "this humanity."

Prudence. By Josef Pieper. Pantheon. $2.75. This tiny book completes Pieper's study of the cardinal virtues, and seems to us to approach, more than any other yet in English, his remarkable work *Leisure.* It is pithy, almost in aphorisms, and nifty. Over and over, St. Thomas and many another have said that man's good is "to live in accord with reason," but one might wonder what people say when they so readily and confidently say those words. Pieper helps vastly when he says: "that is, to be according to the reality which man himself is and which surrounds him." Things are packed in, and yet the book is a delight.

Schools and the Means of Education. By Willis D. Nutting. Fides. $3.95. Dr. Nutting says he was wondering from childhood why "means of education" and not merely schools. He replies now that all of us are assuming that schools are the whole story. In blunt words and with much reference to our everyday life, he argues that other forces can be as effective and as positive in educating as are schools; work for instance, and the family and home, and the adult friend of the child. He disallows sports and games and seems to be anxious in a kind of post-puritan fury to want Johnny to have all work and no play.

CRITICS AND REVIEWERS

William Clancy, formerly associate editor of The Commonweal, is now editor of *Worldview*.

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Little People and Big Events

THE BRIDGE ON THE DRINA. By Ivo Andric. Macmillan. $3.50.

By EDWIN KENNEBECK

IVO ANDRIC, a distinguished Yugoslavian writer and statesman, chronicles the story of a bridge on the river Drina from the sixteenth century, when it was built by a Turkish vezir, to 1914, when it was blown up by the Austrians. The bridge stood in the town of Visegrad, roughly in the center of what is now Yugoslavia, and the river it crossed separated Serbia, on the east, from Bosnia, the province on the west whose principal town is Sarajevo.

The building of the bridge, by forced labor, under the ruthless direction of the vezir, depletes the resources of the village and brings misery upon the people. One scapegoat peasant is put through the torture of impalement, in a passage of description so strong as to be almost unreadable. From time to time the heads of Serbian villagers are to be seen displayed on the bridge after its completion, and throughout the story the waves of unhappiness and revolt ebb and flow across these regions.

But along with the local shocks of history run the pulses of private lives—the loves and hates and friendships and quarrels of the Moslems, Christians, and Jews; these Mr. Andric links chronologically, with color and variety, though not with much humor. His book is a collection of tales, mostly realistic, none in the high fantastic manner of an Isak Dinesen, and their emphasis is mainly upon the local scenes, where the events of history are only distant, half-understood happenings beyond the power of ordinary men to change.

This, indeed, is one of the themes of the book—the contrast, the division, between private lives and the public acts of rulers and governments. From the little town of Visegrad the "annexation crisis" seems only a tremor. "Somewhere out there, by diplomacy and discussions between the interested parties, a peaceful solution had been found." The event at Sarajevo in 1914 happens during a picnic, and its meaning for two young lovers is that they can no longer plan a future in America. The ironic contrast of "big" and "small" events is not original, of course, but Mr. Andric uses it unpretentiously and plausibly.

His book, in many ways a beautiful one, does not quite emerge from the history it tells about; doubtless the reader's own relationship to the places and events of this chronicle is important to its effectiveness. For the people of Yugoslavia there are no doubt endless resonances set up by its descriptions of the ways of life of these diverse people, the songs and idioms, the very geography and weather. *The Bridge on the Drina* does not contain of itself all

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of these motifs, but rather summons them to its aid. Probably this is partly because of the straightforward chronological plan of the story. There is not enough concentration to produce a dense interweaving; there is very little of that delicious and masterful compacting of political events with personal destinies which Sybille Bedford achieved in her novel *A Legacy*. The bridge and the town themselves do not form a center of focus compelling enough to give the book the life it needs.

One of Mr. Andric's characters stands head and shoulders above the others; she is Lotte, a hard-working Jewish woman who appears toward the conclusion. She runs a hotel, a kind of house of pleasure which is not a house of prostitution, whose success depends on Lotte's extraordinary personality. "Well built, plump, with ivory-white skin, black hair and smouldering eyes, she had a perfectly assured manner of dealing with guests, who would spend freely but were often aggressive and crude when overcome by drink. She would talk sweetly, boldly, wittily, sharply, flatteringly with all of them, smoothing them down. . . . Lotte, that untiring and cold woman of chilled passions, quick intelligence and masculine heart, tamed every fury, silenced every demand of uncontrolled men by the inexplicable play of her perfact body, her great cunning and her no less great daring, and always succeeded in maintaining the necessary distance between herself and them, which only served to inflame their desires and increase her own value. . . ."

One wishes that this personage could somehow have been used to bring all the marvedous color and flavor of *The Bridge on the Drina* into a real coalescene.

A Novelized Sermon

GOD'S FRONTIER. By José Luis Martín Descalzo. Translated by Harriet de Onis. Knopf. $3.95.

By PHILIP DEASY

TOWARD the conclusion of this novel, its central character, Renato, is undergoing some moments of crisis. He is on a train returning to his tiny native village after spending some time in a neighboring metropolis. While there he had followed a group of children to a circus where he picked up several of the colored paper programs. He is now looking at the program. "The blown-up picture of a clown filled the center. Underneath, the name: Jimmy. It was not a funny face, but a happy one. . . . In that face Renato divined his own calling. That was what he was, a clown, a man who knew how to juggle six balls. That was what he should always have been; he was good for nothing else."

The fact is that Renato is good for something else and that is for his own job as a railroad switchman. Now in his thirtieth year, he had been a faithful switchman ever since his aged predecessor, Uncle Sopas, had died suddenly and Renato, then only a boy of fourteen, had rushed out at the sound of the approaching express and "changed the points." And even years before, Renato, had assured the old man, "Uncle Sopas, don't you worry about the trains. I'll send them through when you die."

Renato might have lived and died a happy switchman except for one startling thing. He began to work miracles. At his prayer "the cross of the lake" in his village that had fallen and broken into three pieces is fully restored. He brings back to life the pet canary of a lame child and the wife of the village adulterer. But one miracle he does not work. He doesn't bring rain to end the drought that had plagued his village for months.

His city visit is to the bishop of the diocese, who wants to inquire about the miracles and who also wants to know if Renato had ever committed a mortal sin. Renato

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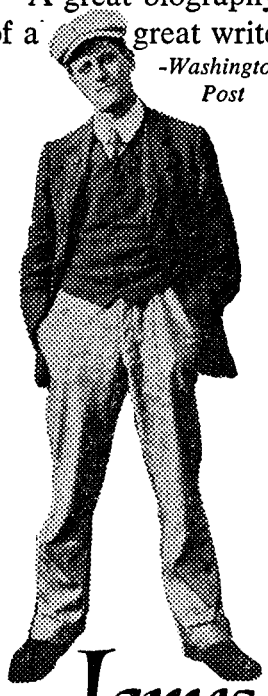

James Joyce

By RICHARD ELLMANN

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NIXON IS RUNNING *almost four to one over Rockefeller in the public polls, but not everywhere. Last week a student organization polled the Harvard faculty, and it develops that up there it's Rockefeller five to one! Now this discrepancy is worth contemplating; worth agonizing over, as a matter of fact, because even though there are many more people than Harvard professors, the imbalance is something we are supposed to regret.*

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answers, "I am afraid I will be committing one if I say no. And, yet, that would be the truth." On the train returning home Renato is in agony because he knows he is going to his death. "Renato knew that his hour had come."

Renato, in short, is a saint. He is even more. He is unquestionably the most complete Christ-figure we have yet had in contemporary fiction. He is so Christlike, the parallels between his life and Christ's are so marked and obvious, that he is totally unreal. So is *God's Frontier*. It is a very bad novel.

This harsh judgment is more rather than less called for because *God's Frontier* is so "Catholic," and because its author, a young Spanish priest, brings up "the problem of the Catholic novel" in the preface to this edition. *God's Frontier* is concerned with God and His mysterious ways with men, but is much more (to use the author's own words again) "a theological treatise or a sermon" than it is a novel. The characters are stock figures, the dialogue is stilted, the tone "preachy," the attempts to describe illicit love embarrassingly wooden, and the novel's episodes largely a farrago of the improbable, the melodramatic, and the sentimental. The best pages of the novel are its opening ones. The first scene is so effectively done that the letdown afterward is all the more disappointing.

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as far as the 14th century, the period of "Segaki"; and David Stacton's novel is evidence that they would have a point.

This is a historical novel to the extent that its principal figures, Muchaku, a Zen priest, and his brother Yasumaro, an artist, did exist in Noto District of feudal Japan; they have, however, been incorporated as prototypes in Zen apocrypha. How wide a net Mr. Stacton has cast over his source material is not an urgent question inasmuch as his narrative is one not of action but of conduct. In that sense the book is, properly, an apologue, wherein historical accuracy is optional. At times, Mr. Stacton oversteps knowledgeable license and shows how serenely he has imbibed the Zen indifference to history.

The eruption of civil war has driven Muchaku from his monastic seclusion with nowhere to go but back to his brother's home, which he can reach only by way of a forest quite visibly and audibly haunted by ghost armies. Part of the distance he is followed by a cowardly soldier who had strayed into the abbey and sought to intimidate Muchaku into teaching him the principles of the Hagakure, the bible of the Samurai; when Muchaku is confronted by a band of the invading mercenaries, to save himself he betrays his pursuer to them; he reaches Yasumaro shaken and contrite. It is only a matter of time until the war shatters the serenity achieved and again imparted to Muchaku by Yasumaro.

Before he attains final "awareness" as a result of Yasumaro's heroic death, Muchaku's spiritual situation is thus depicted: "It was unbearable to withdraw from the world only to fail the world and have it withdraw from you." These words bespeak moral tragedy, but Zen does not recognize moral tragedy ("Actions are neither good nor evil; they merely happen"; "Our own lives are irrelevant to life itself"), and the author has undertaken an exegesis on Zen philosophy. He writes fastidiously and evokes a kind of Zen surreal by describing everything in similes; yet the book is stylistically lumpy and insipid, and it is vitiated by a snobbery that is far less that of a neophyte than a doctrinal dilettante.

"The death of a tree is more affecting than the death of a man"; "The world is a perfectly articulated illusion with a self-contained logic of its own." Zen is a cousin of pantheism with an animistic streak; there are passages here in which Stacton does some articulate empathizing with rocks. But if everything is an illusion how do we know anything is? More immediate, if the acid test for a Zen novel is whether it makes life appear real as an illusion, *Segaki* won't pass muster.

Stripped of its primitive affinities, as an experiential discipline Zen is something of an esthetic stoicism, an elaborately formalized, ritualized mystical culture. What simplicity and imperturbability it does proffer is dubious if only in view of one of its own principles, *sbumi*, whereby an element is sought in each thing to remind of its opposite; which is simply an Oriental refinement of relativism. It does not embody all important facets of Japanese character and temperament; nor is it quite the epitome of Japanese sophistication. The absence of conflict in Stacton's monograph clashes in a revealing way with the deep-seated spiritual schism dramatized by those novels from Japan that have been judicious in their employment of Zen motifs.

Fun in France

A BREATH OF FRENCH AIR. By H. E. Bates. Atlantic-Little, Brown. $3.75.

By MAX COSMAN

THE LARKINS we met in *The Darling Buds of May* are back again, the whole not-quite-believable lot: garden-posy youngsters with Primrose now eleven but already possessed of the wisdom of the nubile; Mariette lovelier than ever, and, in a bikini, catnip to every French tom on the beach;

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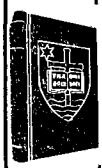

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Charlton, ex-tax inspector, still unaware of his duty to be fruitful but doing nicely otherwise as bookkeeper on the one hand and as tutor on the other in tag-end French or Bartlett quotations; Ma the English Gaea with her seventh tender of marital affection and constantly supplying it with lactiferous nourishment, public present or not; and Pop the "perfick" with his Cockney heartiness, his anaconda appetite for food, drink and women, and his caginess with army surpluses of pickled cucumbers and gherkins.

Some newcomers, equally "flat" in E. M. Forster's sense, are noticeable too. There's Mlle. Dupont who learns to take the Larkins en masse because of Pop. As for Alphonse, right off an ad-poster with his roving eye and white hat'n choker, he is a proper card in his own right and just the answer to a creep like Iris Snow—not to be confused with Angela Snow, sister but oh the difference.

The novelette's works are set going one wet-cold July by a conjunction of Charlton's nostalgia for a French resort of his boyhood and Pop's inability to refuse the Larkin better-halves the holiday they want. It should be said for him, though, that his easy-sealed consent is to no little degree based on the hope of selling some of his army stuff to the "froggies" and perhaps of stirring up Charlton's connubial activity in a land which displays a flair for such matters.

Ergo, Brittany. Once the Larkins have weathered a spell of rain, they take hold of things at their hotel, the Beau Rivage. Ma goes in for her usual role of patient wife. If she doesn't see all and hear all, she nevertheless understands all and forgives all—to wit, Mlle. Dupont and sylphish Angela. Charlton's behavior is less placid. As a matter of fact, he gets violently jealous of the attentions paid Mariette. His rage, however, we are led to believe, has salutary effects. But our Pop, he steps into glory. He uses his several French phrases in season and out. He sells his condiments at a proper profit. Naturally, he enjoys his little peccadillos. And in consonance with his genius, he

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evolves an isomeric variation of Colonel Bramley's Punch. True, all he does is to keep adding seriatim such tumblers or bottles of alcoholic beverages as are at hand, but iced, the mixture becomes "very more-ish" and "coolth," to quote at least two of its prominent imbibers.

Seemingly the fun of Pelion piled on that of Ossa. And yet this reviewer found himself unable to see into Olympus. Not even Mr. Bates' deflationary similes (Mariette browning herself from side to side "like a young plump chicken on a spit"; Ma laughing "like a drain") could give him the necessary life. Over and over again he felt the gravitational drag of such thoughts as these: a sequel is like an original but without the savor; hear a joke repeated to wonder why it was ever funny; more serious still, Kinseyan amorality is questionable morality, farce or no.

This must not be taken to mean that *A Breath of French Air* is negligible. Its mateyness and naughtiness do not altogether disguise something else Mr. Bates has in mind. Consider the Brigadier who appears early in the story. Pension-poor, he is nevertheless a dignified human being far more entitled to good fortune than the Welfare State entrepreneur talking to him out of a second-hand Rolls Royce. The juxtaposition is calculated. So are other glancing hints that the Larkins are not really considered the salt of the earth.

Here, then, is a vein that cries out to be worked. In due time it no doubt will be, for Mr. Bates is a versatile, far-ranging writer. He has paid his respects to the exotic novel. He has cut a wide swatch in the pastoral, both in long and short media. He has contributed to poetic renditions of country ways, to accounts of war experience, and to literary criticism in the short story, a form, incidentally, in which he himself is no mean practitioner. Now that he has gotten Music Hall turns out of his system, it is reasonable to believe that he may settle down to straight satire. He really should; pertinent material is all about him.

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ART

Wright's Museum

ADDRESSING a group of fellow architects in Chicago in 1900, Frank Lloyd Wright inveighed against the attitude to architecture that considered it "a *thing* to be applied like a poultice or a porous plaster." The Guggenheim Museum, recently opened to an astonished public in New York, is his last protestation of the contrary: this building is certainly a whole, an entity, a thing-in-itself. Intended originally to stand alone in a park, it gives the impression of shouldering clumsily but unconditionally into the conventional construction around it. It looks rather like a fantasy-ship with a sliced-off beehive (the museum proper) for superstructure. Inside the museum the outside qualities are stepped up: you feel you are inside a beehive-ship, and may even experience a mild form of seasickness as you circle the inner core of space, due to the incline of a spiraling ramp and the off-kilter lines of the "bays" in which the works of art are displayed.

The controversy over this building reaches its height when its function is discussed. Exciting and novel as the whole building undoubtedly is, is it an appropriate "house" for works of art? As it is now used, it seems to me that it is. If an original architectural genius constructed a building more for its own sake than as a museum, the museum director James Johnson Sweeney seems to have almost matched his creative effort by arranging an exhibit that actually profits from the unified and unique character of the building. This is quite apart from the ingenious methods of supporting and lighting the paintings, which have been greatly admired, and which are contrived more to meet the problems presented by the building than to make use of the benefits confirmed by its design.

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"bays" that wraps around the central domed space in a continuous spiral into a positive and illuminating asset. This asset was part of Wright's initial concept, let it be said, but it demanded for its fulfillment a wonderful insight and ability on the part of the museum exhibitor. As it is, a visitor who gets off the elevator at the top of the six-story spiral and saunters down the ramp to the bottom has the impression of having seen, not a sampling of the Guggenheim collection, but an exhibit which has been built up like a continuous musical composition into a total effect which is extraordinarily satisfying.

The Guggenheim Museum is, of course, devoted to contemporary art and its precursors; the inaugural exhibit draws upon that background for an orchestration of styles, with their variations and contrasts. The great Kandinsky collection owned by the museum provides the dominant theme, introduced by a galaxy of his works in the three permanent galleries at the top of the ramp: these paintings establish the range of the "discoverer" of abstraction. Halfway through the exhibit Kandinsky's *Black Lines* (1913) remind the viewer of the delicate allusiveness of his early work, and at the bottom of the ramp *Dominant Curve* (1935), with its more schematic forms and explicit brilliance, provides a final statement.

Throughout the exhibit the "pertinancy" of Kandinsky seems an undercurrent, most strongly drawn upon by his famous heirs in abstract expressionism. It is for this reason, more than any other, that many of the lesser lights of abstract painting "never had it so good," as E. Genauer said in the *Herald Tribune;* congenial and/or stimulating associations help to bring out the best characteristics of the individual work of art.

Even when the work of a great artist such as Klee is subdued by the placing of his paintings and drawings on successive side panels of the bays (due, one supposes, partly to the rigid limitations of wallspace) an advantage is elicited

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through the delicate counterpoint provided by the witty and poetic Swiss master. The separation of examples of an artist's work (due again perhaps to the intransigence of the structure) is repeatedly made capital of: when an early Picasso cubist painting is placed next to the famous Cézanne *Clockmaker* it appears as an innovation caught up and carried on; while near the end of the exhibit the joyous Picasso *Mandolin and Guitar,* in which a Mediterranean window seems to open on the rigors of geometrical forms, presents Picasso's genius afresh in an altogether different metamorphosis.

It may be noticed that although "lesser lights" gain by their placement in the arrangement of the whole exhibit, it is still the stars of contemporary art that shine brightest. I have never seen Modigliani look as wonderful, nor Feininger, nor Léger, nor Delauney. Modigliani's *Nude, Boy in a Blue Jacket* and *Yellow Sweater* (the former appears first, the latter two delightfully together) introduce the haunting sinuous line that recurs in other passages of the museum. Feininger's *Gelmeroda IV* and *Cloud* separately make a point of cubistic forms combined with poetic allusiveness. Léger's *Woman Holding a Vase* sounds a bold, lucid, welcome note. As for Delauney, the prismatic fervor of his beautiful *St. Severin* seems to have even more in it than do his own later spirited constructions.

As I have said, the sculpture in this exhibit does not seem to fare as happily as the paintings, although the Lipschitz' *Return of the Child* provides an opportune flourish in the circular hall of the entrance floor, and Brancusi's marble *Miracle (White Seal)* lies memorably in the center, as if in a pool.

Note: The Guggenheim Museum offers as part of its educational program a plan of free long-term (six months) loans of exhibitions made up from its collection of contemporary art. Guggenheim loan-exhibitions are available to educational institutions.

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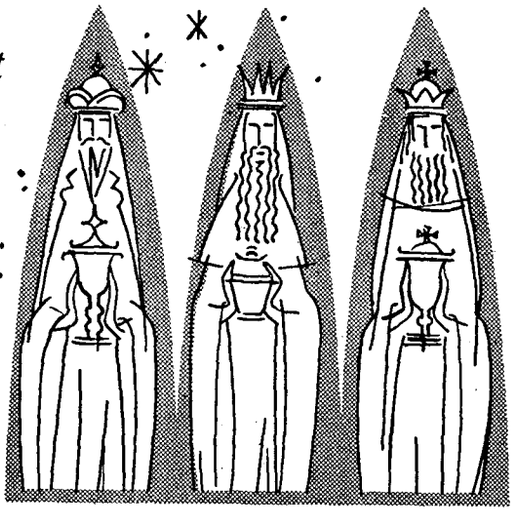

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